THE NECESSITY OF REDEMPTION

P. HARTILL

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THE NECESSITY OF REDEMPTION

A STUDY IN
THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE ATONEMENT

BY

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C. E. BLAKEWAY

PREFACE.

In the Anglican theology of the latter half of the nineteenth century the Atonement occupied a rather secondary place. This can be explained by a variety of reasons: the crude "substitutionary" theories after enjoying a wide popularity had produced an intellectual and moral reaction; ideas of progress derived from popular misunderstandings of the theory of evolution had led many to minimize the significance of sin and to produce the type of "modern man" who, in Sir Oliver Lodge's famous phrase, "is not worrying about his sins." Bishop Westcott and the "Lux Mundi" school had placed the chief stress of their theology on the Incarnation and (probably unintentionally) had placed the Atonement in a quite subsidiary position:[1] and the growth of the Christian Social Movement (in itself entirely good) had led some to find the solution of human ills rather in the improvement of external conditions than in the message of the Cross. This neglect of the

[1] Evidence of this is to be found in the fact that in Bishop Gore's great trilogy on "The Reconstruction of Belief" only one rather meagre chapter is devoted to the Atonement.

Atonement was in every way disastrous. On the one hand, it tended to produce a type of theology divorced from the essential message of the Gospel that "Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners": and many clergy, having abandoned the old substitutionary theory and having nothing to put in its place, found themselves with no "good news" that could touch the hearts of men. On the other hand, those who still retained the true Evangelical spirit, finding nothing in the current theology to meet this need, became openly "un-theological"; and mission preaching and sound thinking were in danger of being unnaturally divorced.

With the dawn of the new century, the tide began to turn, and the publication in 1901 of Moberly's "Atonement and Personality" was a symptom that profound thinking was once again being applied to the Atonement. It was a great book and remains of permanent value. But the reader is compelled to the conclusion that the author had not a clear philosophic background for his theory: and other writers of less merit seemed to discuss the problem with no relation to philosophy at all.

Then came the Great War of 1914, which shattered at one blow the shallow conceptions of progress and compelled thinking men, whether in the Church or out of it, to face again the problem of human sin. Mr. Wells' "Invisible King" and

Mr. Studdert-Kennedy's "Finite God" are different symptoms of the same situation. The thinker of to-day *must* have a *Weltanschauung* which really faces fairly the problem of sin. The dominant problem of human thought is whether we can reconcile our conception of moral goodness with the Reality of the universe in which we live.

This little book was written (originally as a thesis for the B.D. Degree of Oxford) in the conviction that the Christian doctrine of the Atonement is not only true but is also the *only* thing that can make sense of the universe—that it is, in fact, a necessity for rational thought. But if this be so, it is essential that the philosophic problem should first be stated, and the doctrine of the Atonement be formulated in relation to it. That bold ideal is what lies behind the following pages.

My many obligations to others will be made clear by references in footnotes. I would only acknowledge here my special indebtedness to Professor Royce's "Problem of Christianity" (Part I.); to Mr. W. H. Moberly's lectures at Oxford and elsewhere; to the writings and lectures of Professor C. C. J. Webb; and to Dr. Scott Holland's sermons on Sacrifice in "Logic and Life." (It is a strange omission that nothing is said of these—perhaps Dr. Holland's finest work—in Dr. Lyttelton's study of Dr. Holland's "Mind and Character.") I must also add that in my whole approach to theological problems I owe an especial

debt to the personal influence of Dr. Scott Holland and of Dr. Blakeway (Archdeacon of Stafford) who seem to have grasped more than any other teachers I have known the vital truth that sound theology cannot be divorced from religious devotion. In that their spirit reproduces that of the greatest of all teachers of the Atonement—S. Anselm, whose words in the "Cur Deus Homo" I would wish to make my own as I submit this to the judgment of the Church : *Si quid diximus, quod corrigendum sit, non renuo correctionem, si rationabiliter fit. Si autem testimonio veritatis roboratur, quod nos rationabiliter invenisse existamus, Deo, non nobis, attribuere debemus, qui est benedictus in sæcula.*"

P. H.

Lichfield, *June* 7, 1927.

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PART A.

THE PROBLEM OF EVIL.

CHAPTER I.

THE IMPORTANCE OF THE PROBLEM.

It is almost a truism that the problem of evil is the most crucial of all the difficulties that face the philosopher. The metaphysician—whatever his system—is always seeking, by what seems to be a necessity of thought, for some unifying principle which will make it possible to see reality as a whole : his purpose is to co-ordinate and correlate the facts of experience so that it becomes one instead of a mere congeries of disconnected fragments : he cannot remain content while facts appear to be isolated and detached. And so as we examine the various systems of metaphysics that philosophers have produced we find that there is a general tendency towards some form of Monism. But the moralist almost always finds that these systems are unsatisfying because they seem to obliterate or at least unduly minimize the distinction between good and evil : that is for Ethics the basic fact. Thus we find that the general

tendency of the moralist is towards some form of Dualism.

These two contradictory tendencies in philosophy, which diverge just because of the problem of evil, are equally manifest in theology. In the words of Dean Inge, "The notion of a finite God is one that the moralist can never afford to forget, nor the metaphysician to remember."[1] The moralist is concerned with the conflict, as we know it in daily life, between good and evil; and he is anxious to enlist God on the side of good and therefore postulates a sphere outside God to which evil may be relegated. The metaphysician perceives how all reality is interwoven and therefore postulates a God Who unifies all that exists within Himself; and the attitude of the worshipper coincides with that of the metaphysician for he feels that "religion is not satisfied when anything is let fall ultimately outside of God" (C. C. J. Webb).[2]

Since both these strands of thought belong to the very fibre of religion, it is not surprising that we so constantly find religion speaking the language of paradox, and combining apparently contradictory statements. It would be easy to find illustrations of this. Plato, for example, though he is claimed (and rightly claimed) as the father of modern Absolute Idealism, yet found it necessary in the "Laws" to postulate an evil world-soul alongside of the good. (The genuineness of this passage has been questioned, but hardly

[1] "Personal Idealism and Mysticism," chap. i.
[2] "Problems in the Relations of God and Man," p. 257.

on adequate grounds; and we find dualism also in the "Timæus"[1] and in the "Epinomis"—which last, even if not genuine, is certainly very early and Platonic.) Or if we turn to Indian thought it seems apparent that Buddhism, in its primitive form at least, was a reaction in a dualist direction from the excessive monism of Hinduism; and Gautama certainly placed a renewed emphasis on the reality of the distinction of good and evil (however inadequate we may consider his conception of the former).

But the paradox is most striking in Christianity. The New Testament is not an exposition of a system of philosophy, and its metaphysic is implicit, not explicit. In view of the insistence on the unity of the Godhead which Christianity inherited as its cardinal tenet from Judaism, we expect to find passages which imply a monistic conception of reality (a conception, i.e., that all reality is ultimately one all-inclusive and coherent Whole; or, as Lotze expresses it, that "there cannot be a multiplicity of independent beings, but all elements . . . must be regarded as parts of a single and real being"). Thus the Prologue of the Fourth Gospel asserts for all reality an unity of *origin* from the one God through the Divine Word; this might be interpreted in a Deistic sense as implying unity of origin *only* and hence as consistent with philosophic pluralism, though if we punctuate

[1] The dualism of the "Timæus" has been denied by Prof. A. E. Taylor and others: the subject is too large to discuss here. But it is indisputable that there is dualism in the thought of Plato and the Platonists.

the next verse as most of the early and modern commentators have done this would be excluded by ὃ γέγονεν ἐν αὐτῷ ζωὴ ἦν, which involves the unity of all reality in God as continuing after creation. But in any case this is clearly expressed by S. Paul when he expounds his Christology to the Colossians and says that "in Him all things consist" (i.e. "hold together," as the R.V. margin explains). And it is noteworthy that S. Paul stresses the same two points—the one origin of all existence, and the continued existence of the creature in the Creator—in his speech to the cultured audience at Athens, who would readily grasp its philosophic import (Acts xvii. 22 ff., especially 24 and 28); and moreover emphasizes his point by a quotation from Aratus—a Stoic whose general metaphysic was pantheist in tendency. And this unity which S. Paul found in the past and the present he also finds in the future, since he describes the ultimate Divine purpose as being "that God may be all in all." It would be possible to multiply quotations, but these are sufficient to prove that there is in the New Testament a definitely monistic conception of reality: and throughout the history of the Church this conception has been retained by many of the profoundest Christian thinkers and by all the Christian mystics.

Yet alike in the New Testament and in subsequent Christian thought the tendency to dualism is hardly less marked. In S. Paul's earlier writings this shows itself in his doctrine of the "man of sin"—the anti-Christ—who is to come as the emissary

of the devil to oppose the CHRIST: and although the Apostle confidently predicts the victory of the CHRIST and indeed the destruction of His enemy, there is no indication that Satan himself will be destroyed (2 Thess. ii. 1-12). In the Epistles of the Captivity the personal anti-Christ has disappeared, but the universe is still regarded as the scene of a vast spiritual conflict between the forces of good and of evil (e.g. Eph. vi. 12). The same conception appears in a more pictorial form in the Apocalypse as "war in heaven," with GOD and the devil as opposing leaders, each with his army of angels. But the most striking passages suggesting dualism are to be found in the Fourth Gospel and the Johannine Epistles, where over and over again we find Light and darkness, Truth and falsehood, GOD and "the world," set over against one another as if the antitheses were ultimate. "The world" is here described as "lying in the evil one" and our LORD denies even a Divine origin to those who repudiate Him (John viii. 44-47), calling them the children of the devil. It was by a development of this aspect of New Testament thought that so acute a thinker as Marcion arrived at a completely dualist religion; and although no "orthodox" Christian writers have gone so far as he in this direction, much popular theology has in effect made the devil practically a rival god.

It is clear that any philosophy which attempts to give a rational account of the universe (whether theistic or not) must do justice to both these lines of thought, either by showing one of them to be

false or by effecting a reconciliation between them : so that we may say without exaggeration that any system of metaphysic or of theology stands or falls by the answer which it offers to this problem. It is therefore important that we should consider the various solutions which have been offered.

CHAPTER II.

THEORIES OF A "FINITE GOD."

THERE is a widespread—almost a prevailing—tendency at the present time to "solve" the problem by abandoning monism altogether and accepting dualism as ultimate; (some of these theories, like Zoroastrianism of old, believe in a *future* triumph of good which will extinguish evil, but this does not prevent their being essentially dualist). One brilliant and pathetic expression of this is Mr. Russell's famous essay "The Free Man's Worship"; here theism is abandoned altogether, and the universe is regarded as the scene of a moral struggle which apparently is unending, since there is no hope of the triumph of the Good, which nevertheless does not abandon its conflict with Evil. In spite of many superficial differences the same *Weltanschauung* underlies the doctrines of Mr. H. G. Wells. He pays a kind of lip-service to monism by his acknowledgment of a "Veiled Being" in the background: but it is difficult to attach any value (or indeed any meaning) to such an unknown and unknowable entity. Of its place in his system we can only say (to misquote Gilbert) that it "does nothing in particular, and does it very well."

ST. PATRICK'S [illegible]

Again Mr. Wells, unlike Mr. Russell, is an optimist who hopes for the final triumph of the Good : but this appears to be due only to his temperament, for there is no logical ground in his system for expecting Good rather than Evil to triumph. Mr. Wells also differs from Mr. Russell in finding a place in his system for a "God"; but he is a "God" stripped of all the traditional attributes of Deity and is in fact only a finite spirit who is supposed (it is hard to say why) to be more powerful than human spirits. It is not necessary for our purpose to consider the theories of these two writers in greater detail. They both do justice in a very striking manner to the intense reality of the moral conflict : but in so doing they are forced to give up altogether the quest for a rational monism. Can this utter dualism satisfy the demands of reason ? It leaves no place at all for religion in any true sense of the word. Dr. Rudolph Otto has recently drawn attention to the mysterious side of religion, to the sense of the "numinous" which is so integral a part of it : we may not agree with all that he says about it, but it remains a fact that in the actual religious experience of men and women that element has entered in and played a very large part : any rational philosophy must offer some explanation of that fact. Mr. Wells and Mr. Russell fail in this respect—the latter because he gives us no Being in relation to whom such experience would be possible, the former because his "God" is stripped of just those characteristics which evoke worship. It may of course be said that the whole of this side of human experience is an illusion : but this leaves

us with the difficulty that man's appreciation of the good which these authors proclaim so fervently has in many cases (especially in the history of Christianity) sprung from and been rooted in the beliefs which they discredit. Can we call it a rational explanation of the universe which says that the best things in human life have often sprung from men's beliefs in a Being who does not exist? Moreover, these theories offer no explanation of how the illusion came to be: and a philosophy which simply ignores one large section of human experience and passes it over without any adequate attempt to account for it or to relate it to the rest of reality must be incomplete.

But the doctrine of a "finite God" is by no means limited to Mr. Wells: and there are other forms of it which are not so obviously open to criticism. In fact the doctrine is a very popular one at present and is held in one form or another by many avowedly Christian writers. Some, under the influence of scientific theories of evolution and affected too by the Bergsonian conception of time, have put forward the theory that life involves change and development, and therefore a living God must be a changing and even a "growing" God. This particular hypothesis, unlike most theories of a finite God, does not arise from the consideration of the problem of evil: on the contrary, it seems to imperil the perfect Goodness of God. For, although its advocates assert that all through the process of change God's holiness remains immutable, a "growth" of God must involve a growth of the sum total of Good; and if this

sum total may increase, it must at present be less than it might be and therefore God is not *Perfect* Goodness. Further, any theory that places God within the time-series is open to the gravest philosophic objection. For if, on the one hand, we regard time as subjective—as a form of perception—it is manifestly absurd to suppose that God is limited by it: while, on the other hand, if we regard time as objectively real, it must be the main factor in reality, and if God is not the Creator of time and is Himself limited by it, then we are introducing something not only external to and independent of God, but something greater than God, since it can limit Him, and He can in no wise alter it. But to introduce any such second ultimate principle is to abandon Monotheism altogether. This view was seriously maintained by Dr. Dotterer in an article in the "Hibbert Journal" a few years ago; he says, "We must limit Him" (the Almighty) "by the law of time. God does not, so far as we can see, and therefore, we infer, He cannot interrupt the temporal order of events. . . . It is not enough to recognize the temporal limitation as a *self*-limitation. . . . This limitation is absolute, that is to say, not of God's choosing."[1] It is hard to see how religion can ever be satisfied with this other existence—Time—set over against God and limiting His activity and in no apparently rational relationship to Him: still less can the metaphysician be content to leave these two ultimately real existences in juxtaposition with no attempt to find a rational nexus between them.

[1] "Hibbert Journal," April, 1918.

But there is another theory of a "finite God" which is much less open to criticism—the theory which maintains that God is limited, but the limitation is self-imposed. In this way it seems possible to relieve God of any responsibility for moral evil and at the same time to preserve His position as the Author of all reality. On this view the limitation is conceived as due to the action of finite wills which God Himself has created. This position is attractive: it seems to offer an answer to the ever-recurring question: "If God is good, why does He allow this or that or the other evil?" It is small wonder that such a theory was eagerly seized upon by Mr. Studdert-Kennedy in the horror of the trenches in the Great War. But we must examine the conception with care. It is urged (and truly) that the creation of free beings is a higher act than the creation of automata; and therefore such self-limitation of God is an act of greater power than a closed system of fatalism could allow. But even so this does not quite touch the root of the problem, which is, "How can the defeat of a good God be possible?" This difficulty is often met by an assertion that the success of evil is only temporary and that the ultimate triumph of God in the future is certain. But even if this future triumph be assured, it affords no intellectual answer to the problem of the past and the present. The partial defeat of God is no less difficult to maintain than His total defeat; for the defeat or even delay of the Divine purpose *now* (as well as in the future) involves a diminution of the sum total of good in the universe. If God be not

merely good but Perfect Goodness, can we conceive of His creating an universe which falls short of the highest possibility of goodness, since, as S. Augustine truly said, "for good to be diminished is an evil"? It is an exalted sense of Divine Perfection and not merely an optimistic temperament that prompts the poetic cry—

> God's in His Heaven: all's right with the world.

So we are forced to the conclusion that the theory that God is finite because self-limited by the creation of other wills, though less open to objection than other forms of dualism, yet detracts from the perfection of God, and involves a partial dualism, since it allows that evil can and does for a time withstand and defeat the Will of God. It thus compromises that very perfection of God which it sets out to safeguard. We cannot express the objection better than in the words of Mr. Clement Webb: "To this way of thinking, however, there appears to me to be one fatal objection. It relieves God of the responsibility for the evil in the world only at the cost of depriving Him of His Godhead. . . . He would not be, in a word, the 'Supreme Being.' He would not be, so to put it, at the back of everything. There would be for Him as for us a mysterious background."[1] In fact the conception seems on analysis to be really Deistic. God is regarded as having (at least partially) dissociated Himself from the world He has made. He is not the One "in

[1] "God and Personality," p. 192.

Whom we live and move and have our being," but rather One Who stands outside and watches what we do like the Epicurean gods in Lucretius' famous picture (albeit with more interest in us): only—less consistent than they—He occasionally intervenes to interrupt the world-order which He refuses to control. Despite their superficial attractiveness, we are bound to reject these theories of a finite God when we examine them closely.

CHAPTER III.

IS GOD GOOD? ABSOLUTE IDEALISM AND PANTHEISM.

THE examination of these systems in which the monistic element of thought is sacrificed to the dualist seems to show that no solution can be found along these lines of the problem before us. But our survey has brought into clearer relief two of the conditions which a satisfactory solution must fulfil. First, it must preserve the conception of GOD as the sole source and basis of all reality: nothing may be allowed to fall outside this sphere (whether "the devil" or "matter" or "finite wills" or "time"). And secondly, if the Author and Sustainer of the universe be *perfectly* good, then His creation must be the best possible, or, in other words, it cannot fall short of the sum total of all good.

This second condition is of course valueless if GOD be not good; and the possibility has to be considered of a monotheism whose "God" is either bad or morally indifferent. That GOD is evil is an idea practically unknown in Western thought, but it seems to be implicit in much Eastern speculation. For underlying Buddhism is the doctrine that all existence is evil and its negation the only

good, and though Gautama himself refused to consider metaphysical questions and so escaped the logical consequences of his theory it is impossible to hold that all Appearance is evil without attributing the same character to Reality. In the West, Schopenhauer traces all existence to "Will," which he describes as blind, stupid, and groping; and this is to all intents and purposes an "evil monotheism," though the philosopher himself refuses to call this "Will" by the name of "God." His disciple Von Hartmann takes refuge in a "God" divided against himself—an ultimate principle composed of an unconscious Will, like that of Schopenhauer, from which existence and all its evil springs and an unconscious Intelligence striving to undo the work of the unconscious Will. Such a system seems just a mass of contradictions. It is difficult for the ordinary mind to attach any meaning whatever to an "unconscious Will" and —still more—an "unconscious Intelligence": (the modern psychological concept of the "Unconscious" is quite different, since it postulates that the content of the Unconscious mind has previously been part of the content of the conscious mind either of the individual or of earlier members of his race; this is totally on a different plane of thought from an *ultimate* unconscious Will or Intelligence). But when an "unconscious Will" and an "unconscious Intelligence" are in irreconcilable opposition to one another and yet are said to make up one Principle, one almost feels that rational thinking is altogether surrendered. And this has practically been the verdict of

history, for Von Hartmann has left no appreciable mark on subsequent philosophy. And we may safely say that the same must be true of any system which finds a moral dualism in the character of God (though it is worthy of interest that the thought occurs also in the writings of so important and influential a thinker as Jacob Boehme). Nor could a theory of a "God" who was morally evil be of any use, for its only intellectual consequence would be to substitute a "problem of good" for the "problem of evil."

But there are still two other conceptions of God which do not view Him as perfectly good—those according to which he is (1) morally indifferent or (2) "above" moral distinctions. The former is rarely held in a monotheistic form—(it was of course the Epicurean conception of the gods)—but we get something very closely akin to it in writers who hold that the distinction of good and evil is due to an *arbitrary* fiat of God's Will ; a tendency in this direction is noticeable in all systems which lay too exclusive a stress on Divine Transcendence, e.g. in Deism, and most clearly in Islam. But this merely makes an irrational "God" the author of a rational universe, and reduces moral distinctions to the level of illusion. A theory which leads to such conclusions is not worthy of more detailed discussion : but the conception of God as above and beyond good and evil is more widespread and is capable of a much stronger defence. It is urged that the distinction of good and evil—though not illusion—is only "appearance" and so is applicable only in the sphere of

the Finite, being transcended in the Infinite Reality. In the words of F. H. Bradley, "Evil and good . . . are one-sided aspects, each overruled and transmuted in the Whole." True, Bradley distinguishes this Whole—the Absolute—from "God"; but this involves belief in a finite God which has been already shown to be untenable. He recognizes that the Absolute is "perfect" but explains that "the good is not the perfect, but is merely a one-sided aspect of perfection." Yet he allows that from another standpoint "the Absolute *is* good, and it manifests itself throughout in various degrees of goodness and badness." Again, "both goodness and badness are therefore good, just as in the end falsehood and truth were each found to be true. They are good alike but they are not good equally. That which is evil is transmuted, and, as such, is destroyed, while the good in various degrees can still preserve its own character." "Evil assuredly contributes to the good of the whole, but it contributes something which in that whole is quite transformed from its own nature" ("Appearance and Reality," especially chapters xvii. and xxv.). This theory will meet with general acceptance in so far as it expresses the necessary inadequacy and imperfection of human moral judgments: it conveys in philosophic terms the old religious truth: "As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways, and My thoughts than your thoughts" (Isa. lv. 2). We shall have to consider later whether there is not a further truth in this conception, but for the moment we are examining

it merely as one of the theories according to which the ultimate Reality is not good. These can best be met by a recognition of the fact that while the "problem of evil" is one that always presents itself to human thought there is (except as a flight of philosophic imagination) no such thing as a "problem of good." This fact seems only to be explicable on the assumption that the good is an ultimate principle underlying human thought; and we can only escape the conclusion that the ultimate Reality is Itself good by postulating a total divorce between thought and reality, i.e. by a refusal to think at all. It may be that Bradley's refusal of the epithet "good" to the Absolute is due to his giving the word too narrow a connotation; and if so, we may perhaps claim that his recognition that the Absolute is "perfect" admits all that morality seems to demand. But his statements are far from clear, and as they stand they seem to lend colour to the view that the difference between good and evil is only one of degree, the former being merely a fuller manifestation of the Absolute than the latter. And if that were so, we should have to dismiss as at least an absurd exaggeration the moralist's or the prophet's denunciations of sin. On this point Dr. Temple's criticism in "Mens Creatrix"[1] seems conclusive: "It seems quite clear that on this theory human experience is necessarily and permanently afflicted with evil, and the problem is solved even for the Absolute, not by the overcoming of evil with good, but by the transcendence of the distinction between good

[1] Op. cit. p. 265.

and evil. The verdicts, not only of the Moral Consciousness, but of all our value judgments, are quashed in that higher court. But if so, the whole scheme becomes not only pessimistic, but irrational." In fact, by thus establishing an inherent conflict between ethics and metaphysics, it goes far towards restoring the dualism which the system sets out to destroy.

If so profound a philosophy as that of Mr. Bradley thus fails to reconcile monism with the ultimate validity of our moral judgments, it is hardly surprising that more popular pantheistic systems which accept the view that God is good shirk the problem altogether. As typical of this type of thought—fairly common to-day under a variety of names—we may take a very widely-circulated little book, H. W. Dresser's "The Power of Silence" (not because it is a book of any great brilliance, but because it shows the pitfalls of pantheistic thought). The author begins by the assertion that "some knowledge of the law of cause and effect lies at the basis of all systematic reflection," and from this he attempts to prove (not by the most convincing methods!) the existence of an "eternally existing substance." After five pages of this argument he proceeds, "And what does all this reasoning further signify? That there is one, and only one, eternal, omnipresent Reality, whence came all that ever existed, or will exist, which includes all that ever proceeds from it, the ultimate, all-embracing Cause, which needs no further explanation." To this Reality he applies, without giving any reason for doing so, the epithets

"the infinite Spirit, the eternal Father," and concludes this phase of his argument with the statement that "It is the great Whole, to which there is no space and no time, no beginning and no ending, whose activity is continuous, and whose substance is all there is, to which we are ultimately led if we pursue our reasoning to its last conclusion." Then, after endeavouring to show that this Reality is immanent as well as transcendent, Mr. Dresser remarks, "Since this Reality is omnipresent, the sum total of all that exists, we must be part of it in order to exist at all." So far the argument, though not perhaps conclusive, seems at least consistent: but, immediately after, the writer says, "Thus, there is no escape from the conclusion that we are part of that great Reality of God, that we reveal Him when we truly love and serve and are really wise, etc." But why this qualification? Why do we not equally "reveal Him when we truly" hate and dominate and are really foolish? This follows just as readily from the premisses as the other conclusion: but it is ignored. Similarly, in a later passage, Mr. Dresser says, "Since He is the All, He is all the love there is": but is this any more rational than to say "Since He is the All, He is all the hate there is?" It would be possible to show how this utter disregard of clear thinking dominates the whole book and indeed the whole field of popular pantheistic or immanental thought; and even the more thoughtful writers of this school do not escape the same confusion: but it is unnecessary for our purpose to examine it in further detail. What

stands out quite clearly is that all this type of thought establishes its monism solely by refusing to face intellectual issues: and that if it followed out its premisses it would be obliged either to sacrifice its monism or to deny the real existence of evil. And that it does in practice tend to the latter course is strikingly indicated by so independent a thinker as M. Georges Sorel, the apostle of Syndicalism, who justly says that "one of the gravest consequences of the Pantheistic tendencies is a persistent elimination of the doctrine of sin."

CHAPTER IV.

IS EVIL ONLY APPARENT? SIN AND DEATH.

This brings us to the consideration of theories that do in fact imply that evil is not really evil. This view can be defended from several standpoints. Sometimes it is claimed that evil is only apparent —that what appears to us as evil only does so in consequence of our ignorance, and is really good when viewed from the standpoint of omniscience. Thus Epictetus could assert that "The nature of evil exists not in the universe" (Enchir. 27) and Cleanthes that "God has fitted all, evil with good, in one great whole, so that in all things one reason reigns everlastingly": [1] and Pope echoes the same thought in more modern times—

> Respecting man, whatever wrong we call,
> May, must be, right as relative to all.

We shall see later that there are elements of truth in this conception, but as it stands it fails really to meet the problem. Lotze's criticism seems unanswerable: "It may be said that evil appears only in particulars, and that when we take a comprehensive view of the great whole it disappears; but of what use is a consolation the

[1] "Hymn to Zeus."

power of which depends on the arrangement of the clauses in a sentence? For what becomes of our consolation if we convert the sentence which contains it thus—The world is indeed harmonious as a whole, but if we look nearer it is full of misery?"[1]

Again, there is the theory that the existence of evil is necessary to the existence of good since that involves moral choice. This conviction has even led some critics to assert that JESUS must have sinned, since otherwise He could not have achieved moral goodness. But the fallacy of this view is the failure to distinguish between the possibility and the actuality of sin. The possibility of evil is necessary for the knowledge of good and evil, and therefore for moral choice: but there is no reason to suppose that a greater knowledge of evil can be attained by yielding to temptation than by resisting it. In fact the contrary would seem to be the case. In warfare, the onset of an enemy is felt in its full force by those who resist it to the utmost and come through victorious, not by those who run away: just so it is those who withstand temptation and conquer it, not those who yield, who know completely how severe it can be. Moreover, if the ultimate Reality is good, the *truth* about evil must be its hatefulness, and this can only be known by those who do not consent to it; so that to commit evil, so far from helping us to know it, only leads us to illusion and error on the subject. And further, if the existence of

[1] "Microcosmus," 4, ii. 716.

evil is necessary for the existence of good, it is clearly a mistake to try to destroy evil: and so the whole fabric of morality is undermined. But, as we have already seen, the fact that there is no "problem of good" proves that we cannot sacrifice morality without also sacrificing all rational thought.

Lastly, there is the pseudo-scientific theory that explains away the "evil-ness" of evil (if the word may be allowed) by describing it as "the growing-pains of humanity" and treating it as a necessary stage in the process of evolution. This view can of course only be maintained by those who see an ultimate unity in the cosmic and the ethical processes: but, as we have already considered the attitude of those who (like Huxley and Bertrand Russell) find an antagonism between these, we can turn to our subject at once. It is, then, admitted that the progress of evolution is towards the attainment of a higher ethical level; but it is suggested that the fact of evil is merely a stage—temporary, but necessary—in this development. We need first to be clear as to the general principle of evolution. It is sometimes carelessly stated in such a form as to suggest that everything is continually developing towards something higher. But such a statement is scientifically incorrect, and the very fact of extinct species is in itself a refutation. What the theory of evolution does imply is that development (by adaptation to environment, and—at least in the instance of the human race—by adaptation *of* environment) is a condition of survival. And at every stage of the process we

find the twin phenomena of the species which have succeeded and of those that have failed in this adaptation, the latter succumbing to the universal process of the degradation of energy. As Mr. McDowall (largely following Bergson) expresses it, "In the evolution of living things . . . we see a constant warfare between the katabolic and anabolic principles. . . . The fundamental principle of evolution is the struggle" between these two tendencies. The emergence of freewill (which of course enormously increases the power of adaptation) is manifestly an all-important event in the anabolic process. But at the same time this is only effectual if the freedom is exercised in line with the development of the race (i.e. admittedly in our present discussion towards a higher ethical level). If the freedom is exercised in an opposite direction, it means that the free agent is identifying himself with the katabolic process. Again to quote McDowall, "Man . . . has the power of *voluntary* response to environment. But it *is* voluntary. He may choose not to respond. He may prefer to remain comparatively unspiritual. He may prefer not to progress. This is what we ordinarily term *sin*—the choosing of the lower rather than the higher of two possible courses. But is it not in essence the acceptance of an equilibrium-position, the voluntary repudiation of the anabolic principle, the identification of the will with katabolism? . . . In the lower stages this meant death. Is it, then, that sin is essentially the identification of the will with death?"[1] It is interesting to note how this

[1] "Evolution and the Need of Atonement," p. 61.

purely modern scientific argument reaches the old religious conclusion that "the wages of sin is death"—a point to which we must recur later. But if the argument be sound, as we have every reason to believe, it is a complete refutation of the theory that sin is a stage in the upward development of the race. The identification of the will with katabolism cannot possibly be a stage in the victory of anabolism. Sir Oliver Lodge has been careful to explain and qualify his famous statement that "the higher man of to-day is not worrying about his sins at all," and there is little in his explanation that calls for criticism. Yet the fact that so unguarded and ambiguous a statement could be made is perhaps an indication of the subtle influence of the conception of sin as only a passing phase in evolution. And it is necessary in the interests of morality that the underlying fallacy of the thought should be exposed.

We saw above that Mr. McDowall, approaching the matter from the side of science, arrives at a conclusion about the relation of sin and death which is in accordance with the traditional Christian view. But this theory that death is in an especial degree the punishment of sin is to-day very widely challenged on the ground that death would be inevitable to man as an organism even had he never sinned, just as it is inevitable to the lower creation from which he has evolved : and even if McDowall's contention were accepted it might seem to refer only to the death of the race, not of the individual. This sounds conclusive at first, but on closer examination we find it is only acceptable from the point of

view of materialism. If man were merely a highly-developed animal organism, he would of course be subject to the same law of decay and death as the lower orders. But religion and philosophy agree with common sense in telling us that man is something more: he is differentiated from the mere animal by the fact of self-consciousness. It is neither scientific nor philosophical to assume that the condition of a lower category of existence necessarily apply to a higher: the subject must be considered independently on its own merits. Certainly death for man is something other than the death of an animal by reason of the very fact of the self-consciousness which makes him what he is. Though of course man has an animal nature, it is always the organ of a self-conscious being, and no theory can be complete which leaves that fact out of account. (It is not always recognized that the same argument which "proves" the necessity of death for unfallen humanity "proves" equally that there is no continuity of individual human existence beyond death.) It is impossible to discuss here the grounds for belief in personal immortality: but if we hold any belief in continuity of existence, death, like life, must be regarded as a change in the organ by which the self-conscious spirit expresses itself, the difference in our conception of the two being (to quote Nettleship) that "we call change 'life' when it is change to something which we consider higher, better, more developed, etc. etc., and vice versa with 'death'."[1] There is no reason to doubt

[1] "Philosophical Lectures and Remains," i. p. 40.

that a sinless humanity would have been subject to change in respect of its physical organism : but science does not and cannot give us any ground for supposing that the change would have been such a retrograde one as that which we express by the word death, had man not sinned ; science bases its conclusions on ascertained facts, and in this case there are no facts to work upon. Many early Christian writers wisely emphasized the different senses of the word "death," and showed that it is not the fact of a physical change in the material elements that compose our body, but the whole complex change of our full nature that may be said to be the result of sin. We may then approach the consideration of the relation between sin and death without feeling our hands tied by science, since death as we know it in the case of self-conscious beings is a reality which in many of its aspects lies altogether outside the scope of natural science. Human life is very largely made up of personal relationships, and it is the character of death in regard to these that very largely causes the horror and fear with which it is almost universally viewed. The primary fact about death for us is the fact of separation—separation from hope and from the friends one has loved on earth, a sense of the end of all that has made life beautiful, and often (worst of all) a sense of the shrouding of the face of God. Sometimes, it is true, hope rises above much of this darkness, or grim resignation robs it of some of its terror : but (apart from the work of Christ which we are not considering at this moment) nothing can remove the gloom of

death. This is not all: most men believe that death is not the end of existence, that there is life after death: but this is no message of hope to the man who has sinned and knows his failure; his attitude is rather that described by F. D. Maurice: "It is true, frightfully true. Everything must go on; *you* must go on. And every bad thought you have thought, and every bad deed you have done, is bound to you now; will be bound to you for ever."[1] This attitude of mind is not peculiar to the Christian with his special consciousness of sin: the same feelings are expressed by Gautama in the "Dhammapada": "Here and hereafter the sinner mourns: yea mourns and is in torment, knowing the vileness of his deeds. Here and hereafter the sinner is in torment, tormented by the thought 'I have sinned': yea rather tormented when he goes to hell. . . . Not in the sky, nor in mid-ocean, nor in mountain-cave can one find sanctuary from his sins. Not in the sky, nor in mid-ocean, nor in mountain-cave can one find release from the conquering might of death."[2] In fact the more one reflects on death as viewed by the sinner, the more one recognizes the deep insight of S. Paul in pronouncing it the wages of sin.

[1] "Doctrine of Sacrifice," Sermon XV.
[2] "Dhammapada," 16, 18, 127, 128.

CHAPTER V.

CONDITIONS OF A SOLUTION OF THE PROBLEM.

We may now pause and review the results of our argument so far. It is clear that a supreme problem—perhaps *the* supreme problem—of thought is to reconcile two apparently contradictory strands of thought, the monistic and the dualistic, each of which seems to be required if we are to give an adequate account of the universe : any system of philosophy must do justice to both, either by showing one to be false or by effecting a reconciliation between them. We have considered the theories which repudiate monism, passing in review the open dualism of Bertrand Russell, the modified dualism of H. G. Wells, and the more veiled dualism of those who regard God either as limited by the time-process or as self-limited. We found these theories valuable in their insistence on the reality of the moral conflict, reinforcing Dean Inge's profound saying that " the notion of a finite God is one that the moralist can never afford to forget : " but at the same time the theories proved intellectually unsatisfying, since they left an unresolved antinomy with which the philosopher cannot rest content, and ignored the requirement of religion

that if God be perfectly good His creation cannot fall short of the sum total of possible good. We next considered the monistic theories, all of which are in accord with the condition that God must be the all-inclusive Reality ; and after investigating those which represent Him as (*a*) evil, (*b*) both good and evil, (*c*) morally indifferent, and (*d*) beyond good and evil, we reached the conclusion that reason demands that He must be perfectly good. Finally we passed in review the theories which, accepting this as true, try to escape from the difficulties it involves by denying the reality (or at least the "evil-ness") of evil—only to reject them all as untrue to the facts.

Is it then impossible to construct a rational philosophy which can reconcile the monist and dualist trains of thought without surrendering what is vital in either? In discussing this we may find that some of the systems which we have been forced to reject will nevertheless suggest lines of approach to a solution. If we start from the cardinal fact of the most spiritual religion—the conception of the unity of God—we discover at once that unity (like all other attributes) when applied to God must be understood in its fullest and richest meaning. The unity of God, then, is not the bare undifferentiated unity of the mathematical point (as it tends to be considered in the theology of Islam) but the far fuller unity in diversity which holds in one all that is real. In fact, we identify God with the Absolute ; but it must not be supposed that in so doing we reduce God to an abstract philosophic conception. Rather we may agree with Mr. C. C. J.

Webb when he says, "To the question whether God is to be identified with the Absolute, I should answer that I take God, that is, the object of my religious worship, to be the one all-comprehending Reality, but that, in worshipping, I recognize this *as* God, that is, I recognize that this one all-comprehending Reality is worshipful: and so God is more (not less), than the Absolute, in so far as I know (or at least feel) the Absolute to be in this respect more than by itself the abstract term Absolute expresses."[1]

To suppose, as some have done, that this conception involves determinism is to admit that unity in diversity is impossible, which is what the best philosophy and theology have always refused to do. The unity of God as the all-comprehending Reality is enhanced, and not injured, by the recognition of human free-will, i.e. the capacity by which the finite individual may choose whether he will act in accord with or in opposition to the intrinsic character of the infinite God. Just as the unity of a nation composed of free agents (even though some may be disloyal) is a greater unity than that of a machine, so the unity of an Absolute which comprehends free beings is greater than that of a closed fatalistic universe. We saw above that this truth is recognized (though inadequately expressed) by those who plead for the doctrine of a "self-limited God."

Freedom involves the possibility of evil (i.e. of wilful antagonism to the character of God); so this

[1] "Problems," pp. 253-4.

possibility is in full accord with the fundamental principle of Monotheism. But what if evil becomes actual and not merely possible? If one may venture in all reverence to try to consider the matter as it must appear from the standpoint of an all-holy God, it would seem (1) that His full holiness allows—nay, demands for its fullest expression—the reality of free-will, (2) that free-will is by its very nature inconsistent with the forcible prevention of evil, and (3) that yet the universe must attain to the sum total of possible good. In other words, the existence of evil is compatible with the existence and perfect holiness of God *so long and only so long* as it does not lessen the sum total of good. It is interesting to notice that this conclusion, which we have reached by a process of reasoning, is confirmed by religious experience. This might be shown by many quotations from saints and mystics; but we may take one as an illustration—words that Mother Julian of Norwich believed to have been spoken to her by the Lord Jesus Himself: "Sin is behovable, but all shall be well and all shall be well and all manner of thing shall be well."[1]

Here then is our problem. How can it be achieved that sin and evil should be real *and yet* the total goodness of God—the all-comprehending Reality—be undiminished? Here we notice a striking fact: this problem is precisely identical with that which S. Anselm states (in more forensic language) as the problem of the Atonement: what

[1] "Revelations of Divine Love," chap. xxvii.

reparation, he asks, can be made to the honour of God so that the Divine Nature shall not suffer loss through sin? This is where any kind of "subjective" atonement is so entirely inadequate: an atonement which aimed *only* at bringing sinners to a state of complete penitence, even though it might restore the sinner to the position in relation to God and goodness that he occupied before he sinned, would fail to satisfy the requirements of the perfect goodness of God. Let us suppose that sin and holiness have been manifested in their true light, and that all men have seen and recognized that revelation; and further that from this moment sin has come to an end. Still God's loss remains: still His purpose has been partially foiled: still the sum total of good in human history remains less than it would have been had man not sinned. Our problem remains unsolved, because even a life of perfect goodness henceforward could not compensate for the diminution of good in the universe which sin involves. Penitence only makes the sinner see this more clearly: Professor Royce accurately gauges the mental attitude of the wilful sinner who has repented when he makes him express his feelings thus: "I am, and to the end of all time shall remain, the doer of that wilfully traitorous deed. Whatever other value I may get, that value I retain for ever. My guilt is as enduring as time. . . . The more I come to take large and coherent views of my life and of its meaning, the more will the fact that, by my own traitorous deed, I have banished myself to the hell of the irrevocable, appear to me both a vast and a

grave fact in my world."[1] Reason agrees with religious emotion that

> Not the labours of my hands
> Can fulfil Thy law's demands;
> Could my zeal no respite know,
> Could my tears for ever flow,
> All for sin could not atone.

If the existence of evil is not to reduce the total goodness of the universe, this can be achieved in one way and only one—by a creative act of God which transmutes the evil by drawing from it a greater good—a good which comes into existence only through the evil and its transmutation. No one has expressed this need more accurately than Professor Royce, who says that what is required is a creative act which "transforms the meaning of that very fact which it cannot undo"—an act which fulfils the two conditions: (1) that it was made possible by the act of sin, and (2) that "the world, as transformed by this creative deed, is better than it would have been had all else remained the same, but had that act of treason not been done at all."[2] It is just such an act as this which theology has described as a "satisfaction"—not a sop to appease the fury of an anthropomorphic deity, but a satisfaction of the eternal principles of goodness in God.

Such an act as this is required if we are to make sense of the universe, if we are to claim for it any kind of rationality. We must turn shortly to the consideration of what other conditions such an

[1] "Problem of Christianity," vol. i. pp. 260-1, 265-6.
[2] Op. cit. vol. i. pp. 307-9.

atoning act must fulfil : but first it is well to note that there is much similarity between such a suggested answer to the problem of evil and the theories of Cleanthes and Mr. Bradley which we rejected ; it is therefore important to observe the differences. For the theory of Cleanthes, as for such a solution as we have indicated, evil is good in regard to the whole ; but for Cleanthes it as *evil as evil* that is thus good, while on our theory it is *evil as conquered by a greater good.* Similarly Mr. Bradley speaks of evil as being "transmuted, and, as such, destroyed" in the Absolute, but he fails entirely to show how this transmutation and destruction take place. It is the purpose of this book to show that the atoning work of CHRIST is the creative act for which reason cries out in order to give an intelligible account of the universe. It is often said that philosophies of Absolute Idealism such as those of Mr. Bradley and Mr. Bosanquet are anti-Christian in tendency : if we can establish our thesis, it will be truer to say that the acceptance of Christianity is the one thing needful to complete and make fully rational the Absolute Idealist position.

CHAPTER VI.

PUNISHMENT AND FORGIVENESS.

The question of fact whether there has been made such an atonement for sin becomes one of cardinal importance for philosophy: but before we are in a position to face this question we must be clear about certain other kindred subjects. We cannot say whether Christ's Atonement answers our problems till we have made quite clear what those problems are. And first, it is impossible to enter upon a consideration of atonement till we have faced the ethical problems connected with the nature of punishment and forgiveness. Dr. Rashdall wrote a few years ago that forgiveness is a subject "strangely neglected both by philosophers and theologians. By most professed moral philosophers forgiveness is entirely passed over, except indeed by those who, in their zeal for retributive punishment, would make all forgiveness immoral; while the theologians are generally too much absorbed with the question how forgiveness is to be obtained, to bethink themselves of the necessity of telling us what indeed it is."[1] We may qualify this statement by noting that the nature of forgiveness and its method are inseparably united: we

[1] J.T.S. vol. iii. p. 193.

may question the validity of Dr. Rashdall's contention that forgiveness is incompatible with retributive punishment: we may hope that the writings of Dr. Rashdall himself and others have helped to clear the issues since these words were written. But the warning as to the necessity for clear thinking on the subject is still greatly needed. We may begin by considering the theory of punishment in relation to forgiveness. Rashdall himself regarded punishment as purely reformatory and deterrent, and forgiveness in his view is merely an alternative method of achieving the same end. Such forgiveness appears to be nothing more than a refraining from the infliction of wanton and unjustifiable pain —hardly an adequate account of human or Divine forgiveness in the light of experience! This in itself suggests a doubt whether we should be right in denying the retributive element in punishment, and this seems to be confirmed by a closer study of the subject. It is admitted on all sides that historically punishment may be derived from the instinct of private vengeance, however different may be its form now that it depends not on mere impulse but on reason: and it is also clear that this instinct of vengeance is still by no means dead, and that punishment does in fact largely give a means of expression to it which is of value as preventing, for example, lynch law and also as providing a considerable motive force for the maintenance of the criminal law. But these facts do not of themselves suffice to show that punishment is rightly regarded as vindictive or retributive. On the other hand, it is clear that punishment is in fact deterrent in its

effect ; and most people would admit that it is also, in some cases at least, reformatory. But the real question is whether we rightly regard punishment as finding its main justification in the past or in the future : whether the conception of retribution is a healthy and good one or whether it is in itself non-moral or immoral. It seems clear that, though deterrence may be a result of punishment, it is not its sole purpose and justification : it is not in fact of the essence of punishment. For deterrent punishment, regarded in this light only, would simply be the infliction of pain on one person to prevent others doing something wrong : but pain might be inflicted with this motive on persons who were themselves innocent. (Pain has in fact constantly been so inflicted—rightly or wrongly—with such a motive in wars and other political emergencies.) But such pain would not be termed " punishment," though its deterrent effect would be practically identical with that of the pain which we do call punishment. Punishment then is not constituted by its deterrent effect alone, because it involves also the guilt of the person who suffers the pain : in fact the fundamental distinction between punishment and other forms of pain inflicted on individuals for the common good is that in the one case the person on whom the pain is inflicted has committed some fault and in the other he has not. Punishment therefore by its very nature is relative to the guilt of the person punished ; and this implies some consciousness of moral distinctions on his part. For example, one would not talk of " punishing " a wild beast for attacking a man, because we

do not attribute to the lower animals any capacity for a consciousness of guilt.

Here we come upon a deep-rooted and universal conviction that all sin *deserves* punishment—a conviction, that is, which finds the justification of punishment not in possible or probable future virtue but in the actuality of past sin. No doubt the fact that this belief is generally held is not guarantee of its truth, but it may fairly be said to create a presumption in its favour : and this is strengthened by the testimony of the conscience of penitent sinners to the same effect. It is a well-known feature of the penitent's consciousness that he is ready and even anxious to bear the punishment of his sin, and this is more marked as the penitence is the more profound. This attitude of mind is brilliantly portrayed in the finely-drawn character of Dom Balthazar in Verhaeren's "Le Cloître." Here we see how deepening penitence brings with it the conviction that punishment is the just consequence of guilt and should be accepted as such. Of course the classic expression of this is the readiness of the Prodigal Son to be degraded to the position of a hired servant in his father's house. This conviction is really inconsistent with the reformatory theory of punishment, for though this view (unlike the deterrent theory) does relate punishment directly to the fault of the punishment, it rests rather on imperfection than on guilt, is medicinal rather than punitive. On the reformatory theory, the need for punishment decreases as the offender becomes more penitent : yet the facts show that it is just when his penitence deepens that he becomes most

convinced that he ought to be punished. It was when the robber on the Cross repented that he accepted his punishment as the due reward of his deeds. Unless we are to say—in the face of the testimony of the great penitents of history—that this attitude is utterly mistaken, we are driven to the conclusion that it is true that sin merits punishment, apart from its reforming effect on the sinner and on society—the thought of the Greek proverb *δράσαντι παθεῖν*. Moreover, if we analyse the admitted fact that punishment often has a reformative effect, we find that this is only so when the offender accepts it as justly due, i.e. as retribution : otherwise its only effect is to harden. So punishment is reformative only because of its retributive character. The essential mistake in the non-retributive theory is that it divorces the past from the future, and assumes that penitence simply wipes out the past offence, committing it to the waters of Lethe ; but can we believe in a God (or even a man) who is content merely to forget an unpleasant past ? Is it not irrational to divide time into utterly distinct parts, instead of recognizing that past, present, and future are one indivisible whole ?

Important consequences follow from this. It is clear that past sin will remain and demand punishment even if the sinner's future life be wholly good : in the words of Sir George Adam Smith : " Neither the most powerful nor the most pure absorption, of which the heart is capable, are of themselves sufficient to redeem a man from the conscience of a selfish, a cruel, or a cowardly deed." [1] This must

[1] Sermon on " Divine Forgiveness."

be taken into account in any consideration of Divine forgiveness: and we see at once the inadequacy of any theory that regards penitence as sufficient ground for ignoring past sin and remitting its punishment. This explains the insistence of such writers as S. Athanasius on the insufficiency of simple penitence. The same thought is expressed in very different language in our own time by Mr. Dinsmore in his insistence on what he strikingly terms "an Atonement for the memory."

If then we accept the retributive theory of punishment, we can easily combine with it the traditional doctrine of Christianity that death is in a special sense the punishment of sin: and we have seen above that this in no way conflicts with modern science. But what in this case do we mean by forgiveness? It has sometimes been argued that the retributive theory makes all forgiveness immoral: but this rests on the assumption that forgiveness means merely remission of penalty and is therefore inconsistent with punishment. But, to quote Moberly, "'I will not punish you—but I can never forgive,' may be an immoral, but is not, on the face of it, a self-contradictory proposition. . . . There may be such a thing as infliction of penalty which does not contradict—which may be even said to express—forgiveness."[1] The fact that the Catholic Sacramental system always associates the Absolution of the penitent with the imposition and acceptance of a penance is an interesting illustration of this. And even when we do in some

[1] "Atonement and Personality," chap. iii.

measure associate forgiveness with remission of penalty, yet it still rests on the same view of desert as the retributive theory of punishment. The person forgiven cannot really regard forgiveness as of any value whatever, unless he first recognizes that he deserves to be punished. If a man is excused a penalty that he thought undeserved, he does not consider this an act of forgiveness. If we examine the same thing from the non-retributive standpoint, it is held that a sinner ought to be punished in so far as the infliction of such penalty will help to reform him or be good for the community: beyond that point, punishment is a wanton infliction of pain (which opponents of the retributive theory usually regard as something inherently evil). Where does forgiveness come in here? If it is the remission of a penalty that is doing good, it is immoral: forgiveness then as a virtue must consist in the remission of penalty that is not doing good. In other words, the virtue of forgiveness is reduced to mere abstinence from the unreasonable infliction of pain!

It is clear that we can only get a clear theory of forgiveness if we dissociate it in our minds from the subject of punishment. The first characteristic of forgiveness is that it is essentially a personal relation. Not a little of the greatness of Moberly's work on the Atonement lies in his insistence on this fact. Christianity has always emphasized the personal aspect of sin as an injury to a loving and righteous God, which gives rise to a divine antagonism and of necessity separates the sinner from his Creator. Forgiveness on this view is the

restoration of the harmony that sin has broken : it is this, and not the remission of penalty, which the penitent sinner desires. In the words of a great modern preacher, " We do not say 'Forgive me,' meaning let me off the bitter consequences I have brought upon myself by my sins—but rather, let me bear any loss and sorrow in this world, even the hiding of Thy face, if only the sin itself, its guilty stain and power, may be taken away." [1]

Mr. Dinsmore draws a distinction between forgiveness and reconciliation, which is worthy of examination. He defines the former as " the free pardon of transgression," whereby " the forgiven one comes again into right relationships with the injured, goodwill is unrestrained, and confidence is restored." He uses the word " reconciliation " " when the thought is not only the renewed relationship but the perfection of those feelings which result from two persons being in perfect accord." " Reconciliation is the perfect repose of the mind in a restored and harmonious relationship. The persons reconciled are able to look upon the past, the present, and the future with a joyful acquiescence." He regards both as necessary, though he thinks forgiveness possible without reconciliation. One further quotation will make this view clear : " The penitent's will may have gone over wholly to the good ; his heart may rest in a sweet sense of forgiveness ; but his conscience may still be a flaming pillar of remorse, and his memory a Gehenna of torment. . . . There can

[1] Fr. Congreve, Sermon on " Church Absolutions."

be no unshadowed and perfectly restored relationships unless the memories of both the offender and offended one can dwell at peace beside the forgiven offence."[1] Before we can accept this distinction as a valid one, we must go behind it and consider the basis on which it rests. This appears to be the twofold aspect of sin as on the one hand an act which interrupts right relationships with the person against whom it is committed, and on the other hand an event in the world-order which mars its harmony. If this be the ground of the distinction—and it is difficult to discover another—it is clear that it is not of equal validity when the offence is against man and when it is against God, though Mr. Dinsmore himself applies it indifferently in either case. In the former case the differentiation holds, because the finite person sinned against is separate from the world-order which is marred. But where we are concerned with sin against God, there is no such separation, since He is immanent in the world-order, which exists only in, through, and for Him, and the harmony of which is the outward expression of His righteousness. It follows therefore that forgiveness by a Divine Person must include and cannot exist apart from what Mr. Dinsmore calls reconciliation.

There is one other consequence of the view of forgiveness as essentially a personal relationship, viz. that it must of necessity be a social act. There is no truth which has more firmly gripped

[1] "Atonement in Literature and Life," pp. 19, 20, 164.

the mind of our age than that "no man liveth to himself and no man dieth to himself." Alike in politics, in philosophy, and in religion, individualism is becoming a thing of the past. We recognize that the community is logically prior to the individual, that in truth "no one can be really an individual till he has confessed that he is only one of a kind."[1] Thus it is that even sin, which seems of all things the most individualistic, is not fully understood till it is recognized as an offence, not only against God, but also against the human race. Professor Royce has strongly emphasized this aspect of sin, which strangely enough is often neglected even by those who in general are foremost to recognize the social side of our nature. (Possibly it is this neglect that makes the doctrine of "Original Sin" a stumbling-block to many in our generation.) But if sin is thus a taint which defiles the whole community and so alienates it from God and brings down upon it the Divine wrath which Perfect Righteousness must display towards evil, it follows that forgiveness must be no less comprehensive and that it must be in a righteous community that the pardoned sinner is restored.

In the light of this discussion of punishment and forgiveness, we are now in a position to indicate certain further conditions which must be fulfilled by any atonement that could be adequate. It must be no mere scheme by which God forgets human sin, and thus remits its punishment: the

[1] F. D. Maurice, op. cit. Sermon VII.

Divine Righteousness would be violated by any such arrangement. Under any circumstances justice must be done to the sin. (The persistence of the oriental doctrine of Karma is a standing witness to this truth, however much it may be intermingled with error.) The law that punishment and death must follow sin is immutable. Yet men of all religions believe that man is made for fellowship with the Divine : and if sin has broken this fellowship, it must somehow be restored. So it is that men have hoped that God's Love would not leave man to perish, but would find some way to reinstate him in his rightful attitude towards God. The first necessity here is that man must learn the full hatefulness of sin, and become fully contrite : for no man could otherwise be restored to union with an all-holy God. Also, man's life henceforth must be one lived in fellowship with God, and a life too which men share with one another in a holy Community. If either of these conditions remained unfulfilled, forgiveness of past sin would be impossible, for there could be no harmony with God. Moreover, man's freedom of choice must not be impaired ; otherwise he could not be really penitent : hence no merely external transaction in which he had no share could meet the moral need of the sinner.

CHAPTER VII.

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF SACRIFICE.

ANOTHER group of ideas which has to be taken into consideration is concerned with sacrifice and more especially with propitiation. The problem of the origins of sacrifice and its initial significance is too large to be discussed here. But on the whole students of the subject seem to incline to the opinion that propitiation is not of the essence of sacrifice, though very frequently attached to it. The fundamental idea of sacrifice seems to be the expression of homage and dependence on a higher power: the giving of gifts is thus intended to demonstrate the claim of the deity on the life and possessions of the worshipper. As the conception of GOD develops and is purified sacrifice becomes the expression of creation's homage to its Creator, the one form of worship which has no analogy in the relations of man with man, since it springs from GOD's absolute claim on and supremacy over all that He has made. Two thoughts spring from this—first, the conception of man as the priest of creation, paying the homage of all created things to GOD as their representative who takes into himself all the lower forms of being, and secondly, the recognition that all sacrifice must ultimately be

self-sacrifice, since it is the acknowledgment of God's absolute sovereignty over the offerer. The thought of propitiation creeps in in the more primitive forms of religion when the deity is conceived as angry or capricious, and sacrifice comes to be regarded as a means of turning away his wrath or winning his favour. It is frequently argued that the whole range of ideas associated with the word "propitiation" belongs only to this level of religious thought and should therefore be frankly discarded in a more spiritual religion. But those who urge this overlook the later developments of the idea of propitiation. The thought of an angry and capricious god has given place to that of a God Who is all-holy and Who, because of His essential righteousness, is implacably hostile to all forms of evil and therefore to the sin of man : on this higher level the old problem of how God may look favourably upon man remains, though in a different form ; and so the problem of propitiation remains. The New Testament avoids the phrase "to propitiate God," as that might savour of the discarded pagan conception : but propitiatory language is retained to express the need for something that shall make it possible for the All-holy One to look with favour upon sinners without thereby compromising His Holiness. It is therefore manifest that if we are to retain in any sense the thought of sacrifice as the offering of the loyalty of creation to God, such sacrifice cannot be dissociated altogether from propitiation. As we study the history of sacrificial systems, a two-fold need on the part of the worshipper manifests

itself. He is seeking a perfect victim—something worthy to be offered to God as expressing the self-oblation of the offerer and the homage of creation: hence all the minutiæ of detailed ordinances about sacrifice (e.g. the requirements about the Paschal Lamb in the Old Testament Law). He is also seeking a perfect priesthood—a priest or priests who shall worthily represent humanity and the rest of creation towards God: it is this which underlies the separation of priestly families or castes which we find so common in all parts of the earth. And of course as religion becomes increasingly ethical, the perfection that is sought in the priest inevitably assumes a moral character also. If religion be regarded purely from the human side, as the expression of one side of human nature, it might be said without undue exaggeration that it is the history of man's search for a worthy priest to offer and a worthy sacrifice to be offered to God. And since this search is necessarily connected with human sin and the need for forgiveness, any adequate atonement which secures that forgiveness must provide some kind of propitiatory sacrifice—a means whereby man can offer to God the homage of creation and the sacrifice of himself, and enable Him to look favourably on sinners.

This consideration of priesthood and sacrifice leads on to another point which must be taken into account. As we have seen, man in offering sacrifice to God acts as the representative of creation: and he is able so to represent the material universe because he is himself a material

as well as a spiritual being. The problem of the relation between soul and body in man is of singular difficulty, and any full discussion of it lies outside the scope of our present subject: but this at least may be recognized—that man's body is, so to speak, the meeting-place between himself and the rest of creation. Modern science has emphasized the intimate connexion between man and the rest of the animal world, and this has frequently led to two opposite mistakes. Sometimes the spiritual side of our nature has been reduced to a material level, as if the higher could be explained in terms of the lower: sometimes, by reaction from this, man has been treated as a *merely* spiritual being and his body regarded as of no significance. Neither of these views really does justice to the facts. Man is a spiritual being, but he is a spiritual being incarnate. (This is not meant to deny that *ultimately* "matter" is itself spiritual.) Therefore any attempt to consider man must be inadequate which fails to recognize both his body and his soul. Because man has a body, which feeds on and is inseparable from the rest of the creation, he can represent that creation towards God. (This truth is admirably expressed in the language of devotion in one section of Fr. Roche's "Mysteries of the Mass in Reasoned Prayers."[1]) But for that very reason sacrifice, if it is to achieve its full end, must include the offering to God of the human body.

One last point requires to be considered before we can turn from the statement of the problem of

[1] Op. cit. Section "Totus Mundus Exultat."

Atonement to investigate its solution. We have already seen that experience confirms and science in no way contradicts the traditional association of death with sin. Attempts have been made to distinguish here between "spiritual" and "physical" death: and it has been suggested that S. Paul confuses the two. But we have tried to show that for a self-conscious being such as man there is no such thing as *merely* "physical" death; physical death for us is what it is just because of its spiritual significance. And though we can in abstract thought conceive of *merely* "spiritual" death, this would leave the problem of physical death still unsolved. The first condition of atonement which we found to be necessary was that there must be a creative act bringing good out of evil. This act must be or include the conquest of death. Since death is the punishment of sin, and we have seen that punishment is in itself a good thing, the mere abolition of death would not have met the problem: what was required was something that would retain death as the punishment of sin and yet so transform it as to bring out of it a greater good—something, i.e., which should bring not life as a substitute for death, but life (and a higher life) *through* death. And inasmuch as death is at least partially a matter that affects the body, it is the conquest of bodily death and not mere spiritual survival which reason demands.

CHAPTER VIII.

WHO CAN ATONE?

We have seen that reason requires some creative act of atonement if it is to give a coherent philosophy of the universe: and we have considered some of the conditions which such an act must fulfil. Our next question is—"Who could accomplish such an atonement?" It is at once obvious that no mere man could do so—nor any group of men: the utmost that a man or men could do would be to live henceforward in accordance with God's Will; but this could do nothing to repair the evil of the past. Moreover, since man is a social being, he could not even achieve perfect holiness for the future in isolation from his fellows: and a perfectly holy community could only be created by man if all men simultaneously consecrated themselves absolutely to the service of God in the future: and even the possibility of this may be doubted, since there seems to be no way in which we could entirely rid ourselves of the defects of character which are the abiding results of past sin. If such an act as reason requires was to be done, it must be performed by some power outside humanity. Nor could any other created being accomplish for man what he cannot do for

himself: for even if there are other reasonable creatures (such as angels) they—apart from human sin—would owe to God the consecration of their whole nature to the fulfilment of His purposes for them: there would therefore be no *additional* thing which they could do to repair the diminution of goodness resulting from human sin. Further, if we were right in concluding that forgiveness is the restoration of a personal relationship between God and the sinner, obviously this could only be restored by those whose relationship it is: and since man cannot effect the restoration, if it is to be accomplished it can only be by God Himself. What our problem postulates for its solution is a creative act—the bringing into being of an entirely new good, and, unless we are to reject monotheism, such an act of creation must be an act of God. Our first conclusion, therefore, is that, if such an atonement could happen at all, the agent must be none other than God Himself. It was because he saw this important truth so clearly that S. Athanasius fought so uncompromisingly the battle for the doctrine of the absolute Godhead of Jesus in the fullest sense of the word. For him redemption was the supremely important fact of religion; and he saw that no atonement was possible unless it were achieved by One Who is truly God.

But this is only half the truth. If some of our conditions necessitate that the act must be wrought by God, there are others which render it equally necessary that it should be wrought by man. For example, we have seen that one condition of the

complete reconciliation of God and man is that man must be able to offer a perfect sacrifice to God and that this must involve self-sacrifice and the offering of the human body by man as the representative of creation. Also man must retain his freedom, and therefore he cannot be rescued by some merely external action in which he plays no part himself. Our conditions require for their fulfilment One Who as man should be able to be a Perfect Priest: and in view of the social implications of personality, this Priest cannot be a being apart from the rest of men: He must be linked to them in the fellowship of a holy community. Other reasons might be adduced: but these seem to be sufficient to show that if an atonement has been or could be wrought it must be by the activity of God and man.

PART B.

THE CHRISTIAN ANSWER.

CHAPTER IX.

THE CHARACTER OF NEW TESTAMENT EVIDENCE.

We are now able to return to the question of fact whether such an atonement has been made or whether we must give up the attempt to give a rational account of the universe as an insoluble riddle. Fortunately there is no need for us to examine all the various religious systems of the world : for Christianity is the only one which even claims that such an atonement has been made. Other religions either shirk the problem altogether or (as with those that adopt the doctrine of Karma) openly regard forgiveness as an impossibility. But Christianity does claim that such an atonement has been made by Jesus Christ : and there can be no more important question for the philosopher than whether that claim can be substantiated.

For this we must first turn to the New Testament. But here at the outset we are confronted by a problem of method. In what way are we to use the Biblical evidence ? The old method was to treat the whole Bible as *equally* inspired and build up doctrines on texts taken at random : the

modern critical outlook on the other hand emphasizes the human authorship of the books and distinguishes between what comes from the writers and what may be regarded as coming from the Master Himself. As a rule critics are disposed to refer the student who seeks the facts of JESUS' life and teaching to the Synoptic Gospels alone ; and in the past they have tended to throw doubt on whatever is not in the two main sources—S. Mark and "Q"—though in recent years the work of Canon Streeter and others has led to a higher appreciation of the historical work of S. Luke. But even within these documents we have to distinguish between the record of facts and the interpretation put on the facts by those who recorded them. We are only concerned with these questions here in so far as they affect our judgment of the evidence of the Gospels about the atonement doctrine and the basis of fact on which it rests. It will therefore suffice if we can establish a general point of view about the New Testament which does not tie us down rigidly about matters of detail. Clearly the liberal critic is right in claiming that the New Testament must be open to criticism as is any other book, and that the historical worth of the different books must be sifted on the same principles as that of the documents of secular history. But in one important respect the conservative method is right, viz. in insisting that the evidence of the New Testament must be considered as a whole, and that the true historical method is to consider the details in relation to the whole, rather than to treat this or that narrative or discourse in isolation from all else

and attempt thus to pass judgment on it. (Dr. Figgis showed brilliantly[1] how some of the more extravagant conclusions of critics resulted from the neglect of this principle.) To be more precise: from the point of view of the historian the most striking fact in the history of Christianity is the existence of the Church, which emerged in the first century as a body of men and women held together by a common faith in the Person of JESUS, claiming that their society was founded by Him, and regarding it as their primary purpose to bear witness to Him. This state of affairs we find from the early Pauline Epistles, some years before the earliest Gospel was written: and we find it, not as a subject in dispute, but as something which S. Paul takes for granted as common ground among those who called themselves Christians. It is subjective perversity and not sound criticism which endeavours to prove, by discussing the weight of proof texts or "tendencies" in the Gospels, that this formed no part of the purpose of the Master. The truth is that the only JESUS of Whom history can tell us anything is the JESUS Who was the object of faith in the early Church, and we can only learn of Him from what the first Christians taught and believed. We *may* indeed hold that they were mistaken about Him, but if we do, the only logical conclusion would be that we have no real knowledge about Him at all. (This line of argument does not of course mean that we are obliged to believe every detail about Him which we find recorded in the

[1] Appendix to "Civilization at the Cross-Roads."

New Testament, but merely that the general picture which we find there of His life, ministry, and teaching is a true one.) In the words of Dr. Rawlinson, "We only know the teaching of our LORD at all through the reports of His disciples, and if, upon purely subjective grounds of our own, we assume that they so radically and fundamentally misconceived its import, it is difficult to see what grounds we have left for thinking that we have any assured knowledge of what He taught at all."[1] These words were written in reference to one particular part of His teaching, but they lay down the essential principle of all sane New Testament criticism. In support of the justice of this method of approach to the New Testament, it may be worth while to quote an illuminating remark from the late Professor Bosanquet (who will not be suspected of any bias towards traditional orthodoxy!): "Note the remark that Jesus and Socrates left no written records or doctrines. We know them only from the 'movements' they initiated. So it is, too, with great poets and statesmen, from the enormous cosmic material which they embody. You cannot estimate their 'persons' apart from their 'worlds.'"[2]

[1] "Dogma, Fact, and Experience," chap. iv.
[2] "Value and Destiny of the Individual," p. 264, n. 2.

CHAPTER X.

CHRIST AND SIN.

When we turn in this spirit to examine the New Testament evidence, we find first of all that as the background of all the teaching both of our Lord and His disciples lies the great fundamental truth which lies at the heart of Judaism—the truth of the unity of God. It is a curious fact that although individual teachers in other religions have believed in monotheism, no great religion has ever made it one of its doctrines except Judaism and the two religions which spring from it—Christianity and Islam. The central principle, "Hear, O Israel, the Lord thy God is one Lord," is expressly re-affirmed by Jesus Himself:[1] and despite the dualist language already referred to it remains the cardinal truth of Christianity, just as it appeared later as the first truth of the Catholic Creed—"We believe in one God." There are few to-day, apart from those who reject religion altogether, who would explicitly question monotheism: but it is important to emphasize it here, partly because it is the fact of monotheism that makes the problem of evil so serious, partly because, as will appear later, some

[1] Mark xii. 29.

theories of the Atonement have been, at least implicitly, ditheistic.

Another fundamental of Old Testament religion which is re-affirmed in the New Testament is the doctrine of the righteousness of God. The God of Christianity as we see Him here is not a God who is "beyond" or "above" good and evil, or one who is partly evil and partly good: He is One Who is wholly and entirely good, and all the resources of language are used to make this unmistakably clear. "God is light, and in Him is no darkness at all."[1] Our Father in Heaven is "perfect."[2] "He is righteous and just," and it is those very qualities that lead Him to forgive us our sins.[3] "None is good save one, that is God."[4] But the favourite description of God as "Father" carries the thought of His goodness a stage further than had been recognized under the Old Dispensation. (The word "Father" as applied to God is not entirely a New Testament epithet: but the relative frequency of its use gives it a fresh emphasis and in so doing deepens the conception of the goodness of God.) So it will be generally agreed that the saying "God is Love," though probably not written till near the end of the first century, expresses admirably the Christian idea of God, which we cannot doubt comes from the Master Himself. It will be important to keep this in mind in considering the historic theories of the Atonement, as several of them seem to do violence to the principle of Divine goodness.

[1] 1 John i. 5. [2] Matt. v. 48.
[3] 1 John i. 9. [4] Mark x. 18.

But the Christian doctrine that GOD is Love does not, as some writers have suggested, rule out the doctrine of GOD's anger against sinners. It is the anger of offended love—"the Wrath of the Lamb"; [1] but we cannot get rid of it without ignoring important elements of Christian teaching as the New Testament preserves them for us. The principle of Divine retribution plays a large part in Old Testament prophecy, but it is no less conspicuous in the New Testament, though some of those who object to retributive punishment would cast doubts on this. It is therefore necessary to examine the evidence with care. The teaching of retribution is perhaps most prominent in the Apocalypse: but there it would probably be set aside by critics as a remnant of Judaism surviving in a composite work. But it is fundamental in S. Paul's teaching: without it the argument of the Epistle to the Romans would fall like a house of cards. The Apostle indeed finds in this truth the reason for CHRIST's forbidding the exercise of personal vengeance; [2] and we have already seen how he emphasizes the truth that "the wages of sin is death." [3] The author of the "Epistle to the Hebrews" similarly quotes "Vengeance is Mine" as a true Christian principle, not a superseded Jewish doctrine; [4] and this is specially significant in an Epistle of which the whole purpose is to point the contrast between the new Faith and the old. The First Epistle of S. Peter emphasizes the Last

[1] Rev. vi. 16.
[2] Rom. xii. 19.
[3] Rom. vi. 23.
[4] Heb. x. 29-31; cf. ii. 2-3.

Judgment, which is referred to in terms which imply a belief in retributive punishment:[1] and S. Jude and 2 Peter affirm the same belief with a crudity which is rather offensive to many modern minds. If we turn to the Johannine Epistles and the Fourth Gospel, we find alongside of the teaching that God is Love the doctrine of a "sin unto death" and a recognition of the truth that sin of a necessity brings as its punishment alienation from God and His Light, and subjection to the devil: and the author attributes to the Master Himself a belief in a final (and therefore retributive) judgment.[2] And finally in the Synoptic Gospels we find the same teaching of righteous retribution attributed to Jesus. Even in the Sermon on the Mount, in a passage which can claim the authority both of S. Mark and of "Q," we find the enunciation of the retributive principle: "In what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged, and in what measure ye measure, it shall be measured to you again"[3]—language which, if it has any meaning at all, surely implies that God's dealings with us are determined primarily by our past conduct, not merely by our future potentialities. Many other sayings of our Lord imply the same thing, e.g. "Every one who shall make profession in Me before men, I will make profession in him before My Father which is in heaven: and whoso shall deny Me before men, him will I deny before My Father which is

[1] 1 Pet. iv. 5, 16-17; cf. ii. 7-8, 20; iii. 12.

[2] 1 John v. 16; iii. 8, 15; ii. 11. John iii. 20; viii. 44: v. 29; xii. 48.

[3] Matt. vii. 1-2; Mark iv. 24; Luke vi. 37-38.

in heaven,"—another passage authenticated by both S. Mark and "Q."[1] So again the saying about the blood of the prophets being sought from "this generation" (also in "Q") implies retribution.[2] The doctrine that "GOD shall give to every man according to His work" is in fact cardinal in our LORD's teaching; and the Judgment-parables, which rest for the most part on the authority of S. Matthew alone, are in full accord with the general tenor of CHRIST's doctrine as understood by the early Church: and there is no good reason to doubt their genuineness.[3] We may therefore assert with confidence that the Christian teaching about punishment is identical with the theory which on general grounds we found to be the only satisfactory one.

In one way the life of JESUS seems to increase the magnitude of the problem of sin. Judaism, as we have seen, had accepted the principle that they who do good deserve good things as a reward, and they who do evil deserve to suffer punishment: it had thus developed a doctrine of the salvation of the righteous, and the Pharisees had so far elaborated this thought as to hope for a resurrection to happiness for those who had lived righteous lives on earth. But there was no real hope for the sinner: it is true that in moments of their highest inspiration Psalmists and Prophets dared to hope that GOD would forgive sin; yet to the end Judaism offered salvation to the righteous and not to sinners. Just as

[1] Matt. x. 32; Mark viii. 38; Luke ix. 26.
[2] Luke xi. 49-51; Matt. xxiii. 36.
[3] Matt. xvi. 27; xii. 36-37; xxiv. 45-xxv. 46; Luke xii. 43-48.

Buddhism gave up the problem of forgiveness and proclaimed that "Not in the sky, nor in mid-ocean, nor in mountain-cave can one find sanctuary for his sins:" so Judaism never answered the question of the pessimist, "If one man sin against another, the judge shall judge him, but if a man sin against Yahweh, who shall entreat for him?"[1] The Jew could only hope for a way of escape that he could not see, and die with the last confession, "O may my death be an atonement for all my sins . . . of which I have been guilty against Thee."[2] And the life of JESUS might seem to deepen the despair: it was the work of His Spirit to "convict the world in respect of sin."[3] He set a new and higher standard of righteousness — a standard so high that even he who "knows nothing against" himself is not thereby justified.[4] He issued fearlessly the challenge, "Which of you convicteth Me of sin?"—a challenge inherent in His life, even if the words be only the Evangelist's.[5] And by contrast He revealed, as the Light in darkness, the universality and blackness of sin: in His presence there could be no reply but a humble withdrawal to the word, "He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone."[6] The hope that any man might be saved by his own righteousness was destroyed for ever. But this brought with it a revelation of sin in its true character, by contrast with the perfect holiness of our LORD: and so

[1] 1 Sam. ii. 25.
[2] Hart in "Expositor's" Commentary on 1 Pet. iv. 1.
[3] John xvi. 8.
[4] 1 Cor. iv. 4.
[5] John viii. 46.
[6] [John] viii. 7.

helped to fulfil one of the conditions of atonement which we have seen to be necessary, viz. that man must learn the full hatefulness of sin.

At this point we come face to face with the fact of the Cross. Few things can be more startling than the prominence of this fact in the New Testament. One third of the Gospel according to S. Mark is devoted to the narrative of the Passion, and it is definitely foretold by our LORD in the earlier stages of His Ministry no less than three times. Modern critics have sometimes pointed out that there is very little specific teaching in this Gospel about the atoning significance of the Death of JESUS, and have argued from this that the prominence of the Cross in the later theology of the Atonement is due to S. Paul rather than to our LORD. But this ignores the fact that the whole structure and plan of Mark lays a far greater stress on the Death of JESUS than any specific teaching could do: there can be no explanation of this structure except that for the Evangelist as for S. Paul, the Death of CHRIST had a quite special significance and value. This is equally true of all the other New Testament writers: they may differ in some ways in their interpretation of the Cross; but they agree in regarding it as a central and supremely important fact in the Christian message. S. Paul asserts that part of the message that he "received" from those who were Christians before him was that "CHRIST died for our sins according to the Scriptures;"[1] and this is a bare statement of simple

[1] 1 Cor. xv. 3.

truth. Unless the first disciples radically misunderstood the Master, His purpose for mankind was in some way linked up with His own Death.

The first preaching of the Cross, in the early chapters of "Acts" (which are generally acknowledged to represent a very primitive form of Christian theology) displays it first and foremost as a great crime—the greatest sin of history. Thus in S. Peter's Pentecostal speech he tells the Jews that they "by the hand of lawless men did crucify and slay" "Jesus of Nazareth, a Man approved of God . . . by powers and wonders and signs."[1] Again, after the healing of the lame man, the same Apostle tells the people, "Ye denied the Holy and Righteous One, and asked for a murderer to be granted unto you, and killed the Prince of Life."[2] Similarly the speech of S. Stephen, after detailing the sins of Israel right down its history, shows how they all culminated in the people of that generation becoming "betrayers and murderers" of "the Righteous One."[3] The Crucifixion is the culmination—the epitomization—of the world's sin, and shows it in its true colours as nothing else does: and it is because of this that the author of "Hebrews" can speak of sinners "crucifying to themselves afresh the Son of God."[4] We shall have to consider later the significance of the Agony in the Garden and the Dereliction on the Cross; but we may say here that it was because of the revelation of sin in its true colours that the horror

[1] Acts ii. 23.
[2] Acts iii. 14-15.
[3] Acts vii. 52.
[4] Heb. vi. 6.

of the Passion was so great to our LORD. The whole of Christian history bears witness to the influence and power of the Cross in this way, as revealing to the sinner more completely than anything else can the real character of sin as "the thing that kills JESUS." This is common ground to all theories of the Atonement, so we need not doubt that in this respect the Cross satisfies the condition which our reason imposes that any redemptive act must reveal the naked hideousness of sin.

CHAPTER XI.

CHRIST AND FORGIVENESS.

One consequence of this revelation of sin must be the disposition of the sinner towards repentance, which in the New Testament means such a change of mental attitude as will lead the sinner to view his life from God's point of view. It is of course obvious that such repentance is a necessary pre-requisite of forgiveness : and it therefore need cause no surprise that repentance holds an important place in the teaching of Jesus. It was the kernel of the message of His forerunner, and according to S. Mark it was the starting-point of His own preaching.[1] There is no need to illustrate how the doctrine retains its central place throughout His Ministry, and is expressed in its most perfect form in the Parable of the Prodigal Son. It is perhaps more important to consider the theory sometimes put forth that repentance was for Him the only condition of Divine forgiveness and that this parable is a full statement of the true doctrine of the Atonement. We may notice in passing that writers such as Dr. Rashdall and Canon Wilson, who attempt to interpret the detail of the parable in this way, would be the first to protest if the same

[1] Mark i. 15.

methods were adopted in the interpretation of other Parables—if, e.g., a sceptic attempted to press in similar detail the Parable of the Unjust Judge or the Unrighteous Steward, or if the Parable of Dives and Lazarus were used in defence of traditional eschatological theory. A study of our LORD's parabolic teaching as a whole seems to show that his usual method is to tell a story—usually a realistic description of some common event—and to draw from it just one or sometimes two lessons: He never attempts to compress the whole theology of a subject into a single parable. (This is obvious in the case of the parables which deal with prayer, to take a conspicuous instance.) This does not necessarily mean that it is always illegitimate to press details of a parable as *illustrating* points of teaching (as almost any mission preacher does in the case of all the forgiveness-parables of S. Luke xv.), but that we have no right to expect in any parable an exhaustive treatment of a subject. Both Professor Royce and Mr. Dinsmore have very ably criticized this method of exegesis of the Parable of the Prodigal Son, and have shown that the object of the parable is simply to emphasize the necessity of repentance and GOD's readiness to forgive, and to stress also through the episode of the Elder Brother the truth so often insisted upon by our LORD that "if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses."[1] It is, moreover, a false abstraction to separate our LORD's teaching from His Person and work: in a phrase which

[1] Matt. vi. 15.

Mozley quotes from Feine "the love of GOD which seeks sinners and receives the returning penitent first became truth and reality in the Person and work of JESUS."[1] For the full mind of the Master on this, as on other subjects, we must look to the general tradition of the Community which claimed to preserve His teaching rather than to an isolated utterance: and we see there that a significance was attached both to His Death and to the Sacrament of Baptism which implies that repentance is not the *only* condition of Divine forgiveness. We shall return to this point later, but at this point we must notice that there is no justification whatever for Donald Hankey's statement that "JESUS did not forgive sins. He announced that the process was automatic."[2] The whole evidence of the Gospels tells the other way. The account of the Healing of the Paralytic, which is found in all the Synoptic Gospels and is one of the best attested narratives in the New Testament, gives a very different picture. No reference is made to the paralytic's penitence; it may be that it is taken for granted by the Evangelists, but it certainly is no important element of the story as they tell it. We find JESUS positively telling the sick man that his sins are forgiven: the scribes at once protest that He is usurping a Divine prerogative and speaking blasphemy—a remark which would be patently absurd if He were merely announcing that forgiveness automatically followed repentance: nor does JESUS suggest that they have misunderstood Him: He merely

[1] Mozley, "Doctrine of the Atonement," p. 54.
[2] "The Lord of all Good Life," p. 50.

claims that He has authority (ἐξουσία) to forgive sins in His capacity as Son of Man.[1] It is in the same spirit that S. Paul at Antioch in Pisidia preaches that "through this Man is proclaimed unto you remission of sins."[2] Just so again does the Fourth Evangelist record the transmission of similar authority to the Apostles after the Resurrection;[3] and it is only in accordance with this view that the conception of Baptism which the Acts shows to have been primitive in the Church can be explained.

In view of these considerations it seems impossible to maintain that in the teaching of JESUS forgiveness is regarded as an automatic consequence of repentance, apart from any other condition. But one other argument in favour of that view must be met. Dr. White asserts that "the identity in kind between human and Divine forgiveness lies at the root of the teaching of JESUS. Human forgiveness he regards, not as an analogy of the divine, but as an adequate picture of it, just as the ideal relation of human fatherhood is a fit representation of GOD's."[4] One may question this as a general principle: certainly our LORD's method is to lead on from the human to the Divine and to use the former as a guide to the understanding of the latter: but this is very different from making the Divine in all respects correspond to the human, as if the Creator could be adequately interpreted in the terms of one of

[1] Mark ii. 1-12; Matt. ix. 1-8; Luke v. 17-26.
[2] Acts xiii. 38. [3] John xx. 23.
[4] "Forgiveness and Suffering," pp. 57-8.

His creatures. Such extreme anthropomorphism as this would not only put a very great strain on reason before we could accept it: it would also involve a tacit repudiation of important strands in the teaching of the prophets whom JESUS said He had come to "fulfil." Nor is there anything in His teaching that suggests it: if we take the question of GOD's Fatherhood which Dr. White instances, what analogy is there anywhere in human fatherhood to a Father Whom no man knoweth save an only Son and they to whom that Son wills to reveal Him? The "Fatherhood of GOD" is certainly an important element in the theology taught by JESUS: but it does not constitute that theology. The very fact that He uses not only the word "Father," which suggests similarity to man, but also the word "GOD," which suggests utter dissimilarity, is a sufficient answer to those who maintain that any such language gives an "adequate picture" or a "fit representation" of the things of GOD. The modern attempt to express the *whole* conception of Godhead by the word "Father" is merely one symptom of an unscientific tendency to isolate JESUS from the Old Testament and from the whole trend of theological thinking. As Father Thornton wisely says in a recent essay: "What is in itself most luminous will not remain luminous if it is taken out of its context. The context of JESUS CHRIST is all that we can know of nature, man, and history."[1] We have dwelt at some length on this point because Dr.

[1] "Essays Catholic and Critical," pp. 133-4.

White's argument can only be met by examining its underlying principle. The particular application can be dealt with more briefly. The theory of "identity in kind" between human and Divine forgiveness is based mainly on the LORD's Prayer and its Author's comment on it, and on the Parable of the Unmerciful Servant. But all that these clearly teach is that human forgiveness—a part of true penitence—is a necessary condition of the Divine, because the unforgiving man is out of harmony with the Mind of GOD and therefore cannot enter into that fellowship with Him which it is the purpose of forgiveness to restore: in a word, the unforgiving man is unforgiveable. But they do not imply that there are no other conditions of forgiveness: and the wording of the Lucan form of the Paternoster ("Forgive us our *sins*; for we ourselves also forgive every one that is *indebted* to us")[1] perhaps is intended to suggest that the parallel is not complete. In discussing the meaning of forgiveness and reconciliation we saw that the difference between human and Divine forgiveness rests on the truth that we stand in an unique relation to GOD as our Creator, our Judge, and Him "in Whom we live and move and have our being":[2] and this special relationship is consistently emphasized in the teaching of CHRIST and His Apostles.

So far then we have seen that according to the doctrine of JESUS forgiveness of sin is a definite act on the part of GOD or of one endued with His

[1] Luke xi. 4. [2] Acts xvii. 28.

authority, conditional upon the sinner's penitence (which includes his readiness to forgive others). We now have to consider the character of this act of God to see whether it fulfils the conditions which we found to be necessary for the bringing forth from evil of a greater good. Here we shall return again to the Cross. But first we must briefly consider what we mean by a historical act. At first sight it seems that we mean something which happens once and for all and cannot be changed or undone. But on closer consideration we find that this is a very inadequate account of what we really mean, for no act can be treated as a distinct phenomenon isolable from all others ; but it is what it is only in relation to numberless other acts, and in fact ultimately to the whole universe. This has been demonstrated with remarkable lucidity by such writers as Mr. Bradley ; but we may take an instance from secular history to show how the whole character and meaning of a fact—all that we think of when we call it a fact—may depend on what, in ordinary language, we should call other and later events. One of the most important facts in ancient history is Cæsar's crossing of the Rubicon : but let us suppose that, on the evening after he crossed, he had been struck dead by a thunderbolt —is it not obvious at once that in any but the most superficial sense the fact of the crossing would have been a different one, different in all that constitutes its significance and value ? It is important to bear this in mind in our interpretation of the fact of the Crucifixion : manifestly it is an altogether different event according as it was the end of Jesus' existence

or the prelude to a triumphal Resurrection. The criticism is often brought against theories of the Atonement that they concentrate attention too exclusively on the *Death* of CHRIST in isolation from His Life: there may be some justice in such criticisms—and in particular the importance of the Resurrection in this connexion seems at times to have been under-emphasized—but those who make them frequently overlook that the Death is what it is only because of what came before and after—because it was the Death of the JESUS Who had lived the life which the Gospels portray and Who subsequently rose again. So we need not be afraid of fixing our attention on the Cross if we keep in mind that the Cross itself cannot be interpreted in isolation. Thus it is possible for an act that is "past" to be changed by another act in the "future."

We have seen that the Crucifixion first impressed itself on the minds of the disciples as a crime of the first magnitude. But if this were all, the Crucifixion would merely be the greatest tragedy in history, the defeat by evil of the highest good that the world has seen: the Fourth Gospel exhibits the development of the Ministry of our LORD as the gradual gathering of the forces of good and evil for the final clash on the Cross where we see both sin and love raised to their highest power. But from the beginning the Church saw more than this in the Cross: in the earliest preaching in "Acts," to which we have already referred, the Cross is always closely associated with the Resurrection (e.g. "Ye killed the Prince of life: Whom

God raised from the dead") ; and it was because of this that they were able to trace the purpose of God at work even in the Crucifixion itself, which they see as due to the "determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God."[1]

We have shown that reason requires some creative act which should so transform the value of past sin and alter its meaning that out of it a greater good should be produced. It is therefore striking to find that in the Beatitudes which S. Matthew (perhaps following "Q") places in the forefront of the Saviour's teaching just such a transvaluation is proclaimed. Poverty, grief, persecution unjustly suffered—all that men are wont to consider evil and the consequence of sin—these are declared to be states of blessedness. So we are hardly surprised as we go on through the pages of the New Testament to discover that the great saving fact on which the most emphasis is laid is that which in itself would seem the blackest—the Murder of Jesus Christ. S. Paul tells us that the account of this which he received was that "Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures." It would require a whole treatise to show how this thought and the identification of Jesus with the Suffering Servant of the deutero-Isaiah runs through the whole New Testament: Dr. Dale's historic work on the Atonement is a masterly demonstration of this. We have seen that the comparative fewness of the sayings of our Lord about the significance of His Death affords no good

[1] Acts iii. 15 ; ii. 23.

reason for doubting that in His Mind it was part of His purpose. "It would have been impossible to interpret the tragedy of the Cross in the light of Isaiah liii. had not the character, spirit, and mission of our LORD first suggested with irresistible force the fulfilment of the ideal of the Servant of Jehovah."[1] And when we come to consider what our LORD is recorded as having said about the significance of His Death, we shall be obliged in accordance with the principles of just historical criticism not to try to reduce its importance to a minimum, but rather to read into His words the fullest meaning which, in the light of the Apostolic preaching, they will bear; only so can we produce an intelligible account of how the beliefs of the Church grew up. It seems then to be clear in the light of the Gospel narratives that CHRIST's Death was no mere accident that came upon Him in the course of His Ministry, but that He foresaw it and prepared His disciples for it before the final visit to Jerusalem, that He went up to the Holy City with the full knowledge that He was going to die, and that He not only did not try to evade His Death, but voluntarily accepted it as part of His purpose and Mission. The Fourth Gospel accurately interprets the attitude of JESUS in the Synoptic narratives when it puts into His mouth the words: "I lay down My life, that I may take it again. No one taketh it away from Me, but I lay it down of Myself."[2] This does not of course lessen the responsibility of His murderers or deny their freedom:

[1] Lidgett, "Spiritual Principle of the Atonement," p. 72.
[2] John x. 18.

but it means that our LORD accepted the fate which they brought on Him and made it part of His own purpose. Hence we get the great Markan saying: "The Son of Man came not to be ministered unto but to minister, and to give His Life a ransom for many:"[1] attempts have been made to cast doubt on the genuineness of this saying, but it is unquestionably a part of the true text of the Gospel, and thus is as well authenticated, so far as evidence goes, as any other saying of our LORD (except the very few that occur both in Mark and "Q": and even these cannot claim any higher authority, unless it is regarded as certain that Mark did not use "Q"); it can therefore only be questioned on subjective grounds as being supposed to be inconsistent with the actual attitude taken by our LORD towards His Death (a supposition that cannot be upheld in view of the principles of New Testament interpretation which we have seen fit to adopt). Unfortunately a crude misinterpretation of this saying darkened some centuries of Christian thought, and perhaps that explains the reluctance of some writers to give the words their full weight. But the old error was refuted as long ago as the time of S. Anselm: so we are free to-day to examine afresh the real meaning of the saying. λύτρον and cognate words are generally used in the Septuagint of deliverance from the power of outward enemies, and especially of GOD's deliverance of Israel from Egypt. We thus see that the saying implies that CHRIST's Death effected for man what

[1] Mark x. 45.

he could not do for himself—deliverance from sin and the powers of evil ; it is in fact the reply to Ps. xlix. 8-10 : or, as Mozley expresses it, we have "a perfectly definite statement that, apart from what JESUS does, lives would still be forfeit and that what He does is to die."

In connexion with our LORD's acceptance of the rôle of the Suffering Servant, it is important to keep in mind His acute sensitiveness to sin. This point is discussed at considerable length by F. D. Maurice and one passage may be quoted : "If we have ever had the consciousness, in a very slight degree, of evil in another man, has it not been, *up to that degree*, as if the evil were in ourselves? Suppose the offender were a friend, or a brother, or a child, has not this sense of personal shame, of the evil being ours, been proportionately stronger and more acute? . . . Suppose, then, this carried to its highest point, cannot you, at a great distance, apprehend that CHRIST may have entered into the sin of that poor maniac's spirit, may have had the most inward realization of it, not because it was like what was in Himself, but because it was utterly and intensely unlike?"[1] The truth which Maurice suggests here is what lies at the heart of Moberly's famous doctrine of "vicarious penitence." This paradoxical theory has naturally been severely criticized, for at first sight it seems absurd to attribute "penitence" to One Who has no consciousness of personal guilt. We may certainly say with truth that our LORD set the example of

[1] Op. cit. Sermon XII.

perfect penitence in so far as He alone saw sin and holiness in their true light, so that His mental attitude towards sin in general is that to which the penitent approximates in proportion as his penitence is perfect. But this is not quite the same thing as attributing "penitence" to Him: for "penitence" in the common acceptance of the word involves a *change* of mental attitude from a false one previously adopted. The question whether there is any sense in which we can attribute this kind of penitence to our LORD is really a problem about the relationship of His Personality to ours. We shall have to return to this subject later. Here it may suffice to say that, although "personality" always involves a certain individual uniqueness, yet the fullest personality is inclusive rather than exclusive, and love at its highest surely involves some kind of interpenetration of personalities. It is therefore not altogether absurd to hold that the Personality in which we find love in perfection is able to make completely its own experiences which properly belong not to the Lover but to the persons beloved.

It is this truth of the sensitiveness of JESUS to sin which gives us the only satisfactory explanation of the Agony in Gethsemane and the Fourth Word from the Cross. If the Death of JESUS were merely a martyrdom incurred in the course of His Ministry (as many "Liberal" theories of the Atonement practically make it) the scene in the Garden could only be an exhibition of cowardly dread which would show the Master inferior in courage to many who have suffered for His Name: "He

could not have been Lord of martyr souls if His own heart quailed under a trial not heavier than theirs."[1] But if He, Who knew no sin, identified Himself in sympathy so completely with those Whom He came to save that He was "made sin for us"[2]—to use S. Paul's daring phrase; if He accepted death in its true nature as the awful consequence of sin and in the Garden faced the complete revelation of sin in its full magnitude; if He bore this because of His love for others, then we can understand the shrinking of His Soul. It was not suffering, or pain, or even death in itself from which He shrank: it was sin. The cup which He had to drink was the identification of Himself with the sin which yet he perfectly hated with a hatred that was Divine in its intensity. Newman's famous sermon on the Mental Sufferings of our LORD in the Passion[3] is perhaps the finest expression which human language has yet achieved of the travail of His Soul in Gethsemane; no one who reads it in the spirit in which it was written can ever be satisfied with any interpretation of the Agony which does not see our LORD accepting for Himself the rôle of the Suffering Servant bearing the sins of many. So with the Cry from the Cross: it may be true that we should take the aorist literally ("Why didst Thou forsake Me?") and that the words are a shout of triumph; as the three hours' darkness passes away, with the returning light comes the renewed sense of the Father's Presence.

[1] Forrest, "The Christ of History and of Experience," p. 235.
[2] 2 Cor. v. 21.
[3] "Discourses to Mixed Congregations," xvi.

But the words are meaningless, both on the Psalmist's lips and on CHRIST's, if there had never been a sense of the loss of GOD's Presence. Dr. White tells us that "The conception . . . which is generally known as the 'Dereliction' on the Cross is a pure myth,"[1] and suggests that it impairs JESUS' Sonship. Were it suggested that CHRIST's faith failed Him, or that His loyalty to the Father's purpose wavered, the suggestion would indeed be intolerable: but to say that He suffered the temporary loss of the sense of GOD's Presence only implies that he was under human limitations. Dr. White's objection is based on a confusion between religion and emotion—a confusion only too common to-day both in thought and practice, but one from which even a slight study of the testimony of the great mystics would preserve any careful student of the phenomena of religious experience.

In view of these facts we are not surprised to find further evidence that our LORD voluntarily accepted Death on behalf of man in His words at the Last Supper. The great uncertainty about the correct text of the Lucan account of the Eucharist complicates the discussion of this question: but fortunately we have plenty of other evidence apart from S. Luke. The language in S. Mark about "My Blood of the Covenant"[2] inevitably suggests the thought of a sacrificial Death and is clearly a reference to the passage in Jeremiah xxxi. about the New Covenant, which the author of

[1] Op. cit. p. 103. [2] Mark xiv. 24.

"Hebrews" cites and expounds in relation to our LORD's Death. S. Matthew's addition "unto remission of sins"[1] may be only a gloss by the Evangelist, rather than the *ipsissima verba* of our LORD; but even so it is a gloss which indicates the only possible meaning which could be attached to the words given in Mark. And this is confirmed by the account given by S. Paul in 1 Corinthians, written much earlier, where it seems clear that the Apostle is not arguing for a special point of view but stating the general opinion of the Church.

[1] Matt. xxvi. 28.

CHAPTER XII.

THE CROSS AS SACRIFICE.

It is then clear to all who study the evidence that the Death of Christ is an event of supreme significance and is integral to His life-purpose. But we have also seen that often an event may derive its full meaning from the events that follow. This is certainly true of the Crucifixion: on the occasions when our Lord foretold it He always did so in association with the Resurrection which was to follow it;[1] when He expounded the Old Testament Scriptures to His friends after He was risen it was in the Death and Resurrection *together* that He saw the fulfilment of Messianic prophecy;[2] and the two are always indissolubly linked in the teaching of the early Church. The Cross is not mere tragedy because it is part of a process of victory—a conception very prominent in the New Testament and somewhat overlooked by many thinkers to-day. It is the fact of the Resurrection which transforms the Death from the most disastrous murder in history into

> The measure and the pledge of love,
> The sinner's refuge here below,
> The Angels' theme in heaven above,

[1] Mark viii. 31, etc. [2] Luke xxiv. 26, 46.

And it is just because the sin was so great that the victory was so sublime a triumph of Divine Love and Power. JESUS had lived according to man's highest destiny, as a spiritual Being offering Himself in entire consecration to the Will of GOD, in the spirit "Lo, I come to do Thy Will:" He had taken even the suffering and death that man had by sin brought on himself and had made that too the material of an offering to His Father. He had thus transformed man's blackest degradation and turned it to GOD's glory, so that even His Death as a criminal had extorted from the heathen centurion the confession, "Truly this Man was the Son of GOD." In the words of S. Bernard: "Since this so precious death to be voluntarily submitted to against sin could not take place except through sin, He did not indeed delight in, but He made good use of the malice of the wrong-doers, and found the means to condemn death and sin by the death of His Son, and the sin of those who condemned Him. And the greater their iniquity, the more holy His will, and the more powerful to salvation; because, by the interposition of so great a power, that ancient sin, however great, would necessarily give way to that committed against CHRIST, as the less to the greater. Nor is this victory to be ascribed to the sin or to the sinners, but to Him who extracted good from their sin, and Who bore bravely with the sinners, and turned to a godly purpose whatever the cruelty of the impious ventured on against Himself."[1]

[1] Letter 190, chap. viii. Trans. by Dr. Eales.

It will now be apparent how exactly the Crucifixion and Resurrection together fulfil the requirements formulated by Professor Royce in any adequate atoning act. It must be an act which "transforms the meaning of that very fact which it cannot undo:" just so has the crime of the Cross been transformed into a unique manifestation of Divine Love, so that Christian devotion has expressed itself in the famous words, "O felix culpa quae talem et tantum meruit habere Redemptorem!" It must be an act made possible by the act of sin: and clearly it was the sin of those who "killed the Prince of Life" which alone made possible the Cross and its sequel. It must also be such an act that "the world . . . is better than it would have been had all else remained the same" and yet sin not been committed. Can there be any doubt that this condition too has been fulfilled? If we take a human analogy, which shows the greater love, a mother who loves devotedly a son who always gives her the response of a similar affection, or a mother who at the cost of tremendous suffering goes on pouring out lavishly the most intense love to a son who responds only with indifference or contempt? Surely no one can deny that there is some additional quality of love in the latter case which is lacking in the former. So it is the glory of the Christian message, that "while we were yet sinners, CHRIST died for us,"[1] that GOD's Love is shown to be not a kind of bargain which depends upon answering love but a self-giving which only becomes more intense and costly when

[1] Rom. v. 8.

it is unrequited by any love from man. Thus the Cross has been the means of manifesting in history love of a higher kind than could have been known apart from sin, which yet is produced out of the very facts of sin. And the message of the Resurrection is not life instead of death or pardon instead of punishment, but life through death, forgiveness through suffering. In Mr. Dinsmore's fine words : "In the splendour of the perfect light our sins and their entailment of evil would seem woeful beyond description were it not that we shall behold them in the sea of Christ's overwhelming and victorious love. Where sin has abounded, grace will be seen to have much more abounded, and the glory of grace will cause even the blackness of sin to shine." [1]

It is also clear that the Death of Christ satisfies the need for sacrifice. In Him we find the Perfect Priest offering Himself as the Perfect Victim to His Father. The perfection of His priesthood springs from the completeness of His self-consecration. Modern psychological study has shown that the abnormal state known as multiple personality is only an exaggeration of a state of internal conflict found in some degree in all of us. No ordinary man is completely a unity, but mental health requires that we shall approximate as nearly as possible to such a condition. The really great men have been those who, by allowing their whole lives to be controlled by one dominant idea, have come nearest to complete unity of personality. But in Jesus alone is this unity perfected, because His

[1] Op. cit., Part II. chap. iv.

whole life, even in its tiniest detail, is brought into line with the single purpose of doing the Father's Will. It was this which the author of "Hebrews" saw to be the secret of His sacrifice: the old sacrificial system was done away to establish a higher kind of sacrifice based on the principle, "Lo, I come to do Thy Will, O God." S. Bernard expressed the same truth in his famous phrase: "Non mors sed voluntas placuit sponte morientis." Because of this entire consecration He was able to offer whole-heartedly: His sacrifice was, as we saw that all true sacrifice must ultimately be, self-sacrifice.

We saw also that a perfect sacrifice must involve the offering to God of a human body: and this condition, too, is fulfilled in the Sacrifice of the Cross. Here, too, the writer of "Hebrews" has shown the significance of the action when he quotes the Septuagint reading of the Psalm, "a body hast Thou prepared Me,"[1] and explains that by God's Will we have been sanctified by the offering of the Body of Jesus Christ once for all. So He could offer a perfect offering as the representative of all creation. Moreover, He offered even the consequences of sin—punishment, degradation, death—making them material of sacrifice: in none of His sufferings was He merely passive: all were actively offered to the Father as an expression of the loyalty owed by man to God. This aspect of our Lord's sacrifice has been worked out in four sermons by Dr. Scott Holland,[2] which deserve a

[1] Heb. x. 5.

[2] "Logic and Life," Sermons VI.-IX.

far greater prominence than they normally receive as a contribution to the study of the Atonement.

Our LORD offered this sacrifice, not merely as His own sacrifice, but as the sacrifice of humanity, because of His self-identification with us through the perfect sympathy which has already been considered. Martin Luther once said that a priest requires two things, prayer, that he may know GOD, and temptation, that he may know man: and our LORD's perfect priesthood, in both these aspects, is displayed in the Epistle to the Hebrews. There is no need to dwell in any detail here on the propitiatory character of our LORD's Sacrifice, for we have seen already that any perfect sacrifice must of necessity have a propitiatory character in view of the fact of sin. In so far as the sacrifice of JESUS is in any case the sacrifice of humanity it must be a propitiation for human sin; or, to use the language of the prophecy which our LORD's words about the Eucharist suggest and which "Hebrews" definitely quotes, it must inaugurate a new covenant between GOD and man which shall involve entire inward reconciliation between them, and therefore includes among its results that GOD will no more remember the sins and iniquities of men.

This leads to a very important problem, viz. in what sense is the sacrifice of CHRIST our sacrifice at all? We have seen that forgiveness requires the maintenance of man's freedom and that in consequence it cannot be obtained by any merely external transaction in which he takes no part. Even if we admit that JESUS on the Cross was "the

Perfect Penitent" in the sense that He displayed what would be the attitude of a perfect penitent to sin: that by the Cross and Resurrection he produced out of the evil a greater good and so compensated "God's loss" caused by sin: that He offered to the Father a perfect sacrifice, because He was Himself both Perfect Priest and Perfect Victim—even so, what is the bearing of all this on the forgiveness of individual sinners? This question was touched upon in our consideration of the theory of "vicarious penitence," where we saw that ultimately it is a problem about the relationship of Christ's Personality to ours. This cannot be discussed without some consideration of the doctrine of the Holy Spirit and the Church. It is one of the great contributions of Moberly to the doctrine of the Atonement that he demonstrated so clearly its connexion with these other truths. To take one obvious point first: man's penitence is a necessary condition of forgiveness, and a man cannot be fully penitent unless there is amendment of life—the deliberate exercise of free-will to choose the Will of God henceforward. But it is a commonplace that sin always involves the loss of will-power towards good: "the evil I would not, that I do,"[1] is the experience of us all. And there could be no real atonement unless it brought with it a new power which, without impairing our freedom, can save us from this impotence. It is simply not true that in our present state "we needs must love the highest when we see it:" sin cannot

[1] Rom. vii. 19.

in this way be reduced to mere ignorance. We may wish to act on the vision of truth and holiness which we see : but we need an infusion of power to turn our wishes into our will. This must be power from within—power which has become part of ourselves. But this is exactly the kind of power which the New Testament tells us was given in the bestowal of the Holy Spirit Who comes not merely as "the Spirit of GOD" but as "the Spirit of CHRIST," of the CHRIST Who saw sin as it is and conquered it. And He comes to make effective in us the presence of CHRIST. It is important to remember that what we are concerned with at this point is *man's* battle against sin and the possibility of man's victory : hence it is necessary to emphasize that all this work is done in the human sphere, and that the Holy Spirit accomplishes His work by conveying the Manhood of CHRIST to us and making It real within us. So the Spirit comes, not to supersede the work of man, but to enable man to do GOD's work : hence is explained the otherwise astonishing fact that in the Christian Church all this grace of the Holy Spirit is mediated through man. (This is sometimes regarded as a specifically "Catholic" conception : so it is perhaps worth while to point out that it applies equally to all forms of Christianity. The human mediation which the Protestant recognizes in the preacher or in the inspired writers of Scripture is the same kind as that which the Catholic finds in the Sacramental system. And from the standpoint of Catholic theology this principle of mediation is equally true of the ministry of the Word and of

the Sacraments.) So we find that S. Paul (and there is no reason to think he was unique in this) teaches that baptism means "putting on CHRIST"[1] so that the baptized person is—in the Apostle's great phrase—"in CHRIST." The same thought is expressed in the Johannine teaching about the Vine and the Branches and in the Pauline doctrine of the Church as the Body of CHRIST. The Christian is in the New Testament not merely a follower of the Master but also what the Catechism calls a "member of CHRIST," one who shares in His actual life. The same thought is implicit in the idea (however we interpret it) of "eating" His Body and "drinking" His Blood—the life-giving principle—in the Eucharist. It cannot be too strongly insisted that no theory of the Atonement can be true either to the demands of ethics or to the New Testament which does not emphasize this doctrine of the indwelling CHRIST. It is because of their one-sidedness in ignoring this that many "transactional theories" of the Atonement have been condemned (and sometimes justly condemned) as immoral. It is in fact this sense of personal union with CHRIST which makes it possible for the penitent to rest assured that he is forgiven: it may be worth while to illustrate this by a quotation from one of the great penitents of history—John Bunyan. He writes: "The LORD . . . did lead me into the Mystery of Union with the Son of God; that I was joined to Him, that I was Flesh of His Flesh, and Bone of His

[1] Gal. iii. 27.

Bone. . . . Now could I see myself in Heaven and Earth at once : in Heaven by my CHRIST, by my Head, by my Righteousness and Life, though on earth by Body or Person. Now I saw CHRIST JESUS was looked upon of GOD, and should also be looked upon by us, as that Common or Publick Person, in whom all the whole Body of His Elect are always to be considered and reckoned ; that we fulfilled the law by Him, died by Him, rose from the dead by Him, got the victory over Sin, Death, the Devil, and Hell, by Him ; when He died, we died, and so of His Resurrection."[1] It would be difficult to find anything further removed from a mere external transaction or an immoral substitution of the innocent for the guilty !

[1] "Grace Abounding," §§ 233-4.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE CHURCH AND THE ATONEMENT.

THE quotation from Bunyan at the end of the last chapter suggests another important point in regard to the Christian way of salvation—its essentially corporate character. A Christian who is not a member of the Church is from the standpoint of the New Testament an impossibility. "The fellowship" is one of the distinctive marks of the new dispensation. It is not as individuals but in the harmony of a Divinely-inspired society that the disciples find salvation. The Sacrament which first unites them to CHRIST also admits them to membership in the Church which is His Body. The other great Sacrament which brings them into closest communion with Him is also the bond of unity; "we, being many, are one bread, one body, for we are all partakers of that one bread."[1] Hence the Cross proves to be not only a power that attracts men to CHRIST, but also a great unifying force which breaks down all barriers of race and class and sex and makes humanity one man in CHRIST JESUS.[2] History strikingly confirms this claim; whenever the Church has been lax in proclaiming CHRIST crucified to the world, it has

[1] 1 Cor. x. 17. [2] Eph. ii. 11-16.

tended to break up into sects and parties and ecclesiastical strife has run high; but whenever the Church has been filled with missionary zeal to preach the message of salvation through the Cross, there has been a simultaneous longing for unity and a yearning to break down barriers between man and man. Thus the Church emerges as a Divine society not because those who believed in JESUS found it useful to work together, but because forgiveness is a social thing and the new life which is the fruit of real penitence is a social life and so demands the right environment in which to develop.

This thought of the Church as the Body of CHRIST also helps to throw light on the problem upon which we touched above about the possibility of vicarious penitence. Here the late Bishop of Zanzibar (Dr. Weston) has developed the suggestions of Moberly's famous theory. His own words best express how the two ideas of vicarious penitence and the Church as the Body of CHRIST help to illuminate one another: "Instead of laying all the emphasis on the need of our self-surrender to the Perfect Penitent that He may become Penitent for us, and that His Penitence may complete and compensate for what is lacking in our own, it seems to us more reasonable and true to throw much of the stress upon the adoption by CHRIST, with a view to penitence, of His Mystical Body. For in it He finds the sense of sin committed that is foreign to His own personality. Knit in closest union with the members of His Body, dominating their inner self, He shares with them the feeling of sin

that is properly their own; bears it with them and in them; and by His own perfect love, that is penance and reparation, raises it to the level and gives it the merit of His own activity." "The CHRIST in the Mystical Body is found offering a sacrifice of penitence that was impossible to Him in His natural Body; yet it is His and not the Church's; He gives it her and enables her to use and show it. The All Holy alone is worthy to offer perfect penitence for sin committed, since He alone can measure its evil; and He can do it only by means of a redeemed sinner who is conscious of the sin, since he alone can feel its personal shame."[1] This view is free from the objections which may justly be brought against the bare view of "vicarious penitence" taken alone, and it is much more in accordance with the general teaching of the New Testament about the relation of the Christian to CHRIST: while at the same time it preserves all that is most valuable in Moberly's theory.

Moreover, this fits in with and is interpreted by the traditional teaching of Catholic Christianity about penitence. Forgiveness on this view is not an automatic consequence of repentance (which we saw was contrary to the New Testament) but is a definite act of GOD in CHRIST. This act, like GOD's other activities, is mediated through His Body the Church: so we get the commission recorded in the Fourth Gospel by virtue of which the Church has power to remit and retain sins;[2] so also S. Paul claims to have been entrusted with

[1] "Fulness of Christ," chap. ii. [2] John xx. 23.

the ministry of reconciliation, and to forgive "in the Person of CHRIST."[1] Catholic theology has taught that forgiveness follows at once upon "perfect contrition": but in view of the taint which sin produces in the soul of the sinner it is at least doubtful whether a sinner's contrition ever can be "perfect." Certainly such contrition is very rare. And in so far as forgiveness is social, it cannot possibly be obtained by the individual's solitary activity. But through the Church's use of the power of Absolution, CHRIST—in Dr. Weston's phrase—"adopts, with a view to penitence" His Body the Church and offers perfect penitence "by means of a redeemed sinner who is conscious of his sin:" thus does CHRIST supply what is lacking even in the best of human penitence and bestow forgiveness within the redeemed Society. Because of the social character of sin, confession is required not merely to GOD but to the Church, either by open confession or by confession before the priest as the Church's representative; and the absolution in conveying GOD's pardon also restores the broken fellowship of man with man in CHRIST.

We have yet to consider our own association with the work of CHRIST in its sacrificial aspect. We have seen that in His Death JESUS offered for the first time in a sinful world a perfect sacrifice to the Father: and it was in recognition that this offering had been consummated that He said "It is finished"[2]—finished in the sense that an artist's masterpiece is finished when he adds the last stroke

[1] 2 Cor. ii. 10. [2] τετέλεσται, John xix. 30.

of his brush and leaves the work as an abiding reality. This truth of the abiding reality of the Sacrifice of the Cross gives us the clue to our association with it : if it were simply the oblation of JESUS long ago, it would not be of any use to men and women of later generations in their desire to offer sacrifice to their Maker. But He has left us in the Eucharist the means of proclaiming that Death till He come. In heaven the glorified LORD —"the Lamb as it had been slain" in the midst of the Throne [1]—for ever presents before the Father the Sacrifice once made : He "abideth a priest continually" and "ever liveth to make intercession for us," having as our Forerunner entered into the Holy Place.[2] But in the Eucharist "we have an Altar." [3] (The reference to "eating" seems to make it clear, despite the differences of commentators, that this phrase in "Hebrews" does refer to the Eucharist.) Here the same Sacrifice is continued in the Church on earth, without addition (because it is complete) and without repetition (because what is an abiding reality cannot be repeated). CHRIST as Priest in and through His Mystical Body presents the one perfect Sacrifice—but with this difference, that we, united to Him in His Body, can make it our offering too and so fulfil our vocation as human beings to be "priests unto GOD." [4] In union with Him as Priest we share His Perfect Priesthood : in union with Him as Victim we include ourselves in what is offered in the spirit of Dr. Bright's well-known hymn :—

[1] Rev. v. 6; vii. 17.
[2] Heb. vii. 24-5; iv. 14.
[3] Heb. xiii. 10.
[4] Rev. i. 6.

Look, Father, look on His anointed Face,
And only look on us as found in Him.

So S. Gregory said that the Mass "will be truly a sacrifice to God for us when we have made ourselves a sacrifice."[1] Thus, for us as for Him, the principle is preserved that all true sacrifice must involve self-sacrifice; and also the conception of man as the priest of all creation offering to God the homage of the lower creatures as well as his own is strikingly demonstrated in the offering of the elements of bread and wine for Him to use and hallow. Here again we see how the association of the Cross with the sacramental system takes away the basis of the ethical criticisms brought against "transactional theories": because the Cross is not something done for us, which we passively receive, but something with which through the power of the indwelling Spirit we identify ourselves and make it our own.

The last of the conditions which we saw that an atoning act must fulfil is that it should involve the conquest of physical death. We have already referred to the importance of the Resurrection in connexion with the Atonement, so that there is little need to elaborate this point. But the Resurrection, as the New Testament describes it, was the definite undoing by God of the death which sin brought. Mere survival or immortality of the soul would not be sufficient; but there is no hint of such things in the Gospels. They make it clear that the Body which died and was buried was the

[1] "Dial." iv. 59 (quoted by Dudden in his "Life" of S. Gregory).

Body which—transformed and glorified, yet still the same—was raised at a definite moment of time "on the third day." This Resurrection of CHRIST is the pledge of the resurrection of those who are united to Him, so that for them too death is transformed and becomes the pathway to a higher and fuller life—the "unmooring"[1] of the soul (to use the beautiful metaphor of the pastoral Epistles) whereby it is free to float on its native element in the ocean of GOD's Love. But the triumph is a complete one, and man's physical nature as well as his soul is involved in the Redemption. Thus there is no dualism, in which matter is regarded as illusory or evil, but all creation is restored to be what it was meant to be in the eternal purpose of the Creator Who saw all that He had made "and behold, it was very good."

We have now seen that the work of JESUS CHRIST as that is portrayed in the New Testament and as it has been understood in the Christian Church fulfils all the conditions which philosophy demanded if an intelligible account of the universe is to be given. We also saw that there are certain conditions in the agent as well as in the act which appeared to be necessary, viz. that the creative act of atonement must be the act of GOD Himself, since man cannot effect reconciliation, and yet that it must be the work of one who is human, since it involved the offering of humanity by humanity to GOD. It is clear that these conditions also are fulfilled in the Person of JESUS CHRIST, if we accept

[1] 2 Tim. iv. 6.

the interpretation of His Personality given by Catholic theology, that He is at one and the same time perfect God and perfect Man. Obviously the theology of the Incarnation is too large a subject to be discussed here. It must suffice to point out that, on the one hand, all the reasons which led the first disciples to find in Jesus the perfect Priest were evidences that He is really human, with a human body, subject to human temptations and sufferings, touched by human sympathy, liable as Man to death: and on the other hand, His Personality defied interpretation in purely human categories; He claimed, not so much by His actual words (though many of them make amazing claims of a supernatural character) as by the position which He assumed for Himself in the lives of His followers, an authority which was more than human; He claimed, as no mere human being could do without insanity, to be the medium through which men were to come into contact with God; He died because He made a claim which the High Priest interpreted as blasphemy; and the Divine authority which He thus asserted was vindicated by the Resurrection whereby He was "declared to be the Son of God with power."[1] Thus His acts are the acts of God and proofs of the character and power of God: "God commendeth His own love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us."[2]

[1] Rom. i. 4. [2] Rom. v. 8.

CHAPTER XIV.

THEORIES OF THE ATONEMENT.

THERE have been many theories of the Atonement, to none of which has the Church ever officially committed itself. To discuss these theories in detail would require a large treatise and is a task which cannot be attempted here : but it may be well to review very briefly some of the chief theories that have been propounded in relation to the view which has been here set forth, in order to see in what respects they are satisfactory and where they fail either in their statement of the problem or in their explanation of how it is solved by the work of CHRIST.

First we may consider the theory which was widely accepted for many centuries that our LORD redeemed us by paying the ransom-price of His life-blood to the devil. This theory originated through an excessive emphasis on our LORD's words about giving His life a "ransom for many" : the word "ransom" (λύτρον) was interpreted in its most literal sense and this suggested the question "To whom was the ransom paid?" Probably Origen, who seems to have originated this theory, never intended it to be understood as literally as it came to be later by some of the less philosophic thinkers of the Western Church. The theory was

rejected by some of the Greek Fathers (such as S. Gregory Nazianzen and S. John of Damascus) and was finally abandoned almost universally as the result of the criticisms of S. Anselm. There is no need to-day to dwell on its imperfections: the whole idea of a compact between God and the devil, with the underlying assumption that the devil has "rights" over fallen man is obviously repulsive to the Christian consciousness: it is in fact really a denial of the absolute sovereignty of God and the enthronement of the devil as a second, though inferior, god. It fails as a theory because it is ultimately dualist. But it nevertheless enshrined one or two important principles. It emphasized very forcibly the reality of the conflict between good and evil, man's inability to redeem himself from the consequences of sin, and the fact that the Cross is, in one aspect, the culmination of sin.

Another patristic theory, associated especially with the names of SS. Irenæus and Athanasius, lays the main stress on the Incarnation regarded as the act by which God assumed human nature in order that man might become partaker of the Divine Nature through Him. Our Lord's humanity thus recapitulates and sums up the whole human race and restores it to unity with God. This theory is inadequate because it does not sufficiently deal with the need for penitence and forgiveness and the sacrificial significance of the Cross. But it is valuable as far as it goes: it helps to make clear the truth that has been discussed above that the agent of redemption must be One Who is at once

Divine and human ; it emphasizes the solidarity of the human race, and the corporate character of redemption ; and it elucidates the mystical union of God and man, which is sometimes apt to be overlooked in theories which present the Atonement as almost exclusively a "transaction."

S. Anselm, as we have already seen, bases his theory mainly on the thought of the Atonement as the payment of a debt due to God from man, as something by which His honour is vindicated. S. Anselm's language and categories of thought are largely influenced by the social environment of his day : and critics of his writings have urged with some truth that he tends too much to regard God as a feudal lord. Moreover, his theory seems to make rather too sharp a distinction between the Father Whose honour has to be satisfied and the Son Who pays the debt and so comes near to imperilling the cardinal truth of Monotheism. In his concern with the Godward aspect of Atonement, the equally important manward side hardly receives sufficient emphasis, and the whole work of redemption seems to be a process of rather a mechanical character, remote from the actual religious life and experience of men. But these criticisms really touch the form rather than the substance of S. Anselm's doctrine ; and his statement of the problem which the Atonement had to solve as the vindication of the character of God in the world that He has made entitles the "Cur Deus Homo" to rank as the greatest work on the subject which Christian theology has yet produced.

Partly as a reaction from the earlier theories,

that associated with the name of Abelard lays the main stress on the Cross as the supreme exhibition of the Love of GOD, evoking man's love for GOD as a response. This forms the substance of those modern theories of the Atonement which are generally classified as "subjective," of which probably the ablest expression is found in Dr. Rashdall's Bampton Lectures. The positive content of these theories is entirely good: they fail only because they are one-sided and overlook the importance of other truths which have already been considered. Abelard himself did not claim that this aspect of the Atonement was the whole truth of the matter, as some of his modern followers have done, but recognized also the "objective" Godward aspect of CHRIST'S saving work.

The earlier Protestant theologians tended on the whole to adopt the theory which described our LORD as suffering in our stead the penal consequences of our sin. This doctrine has not unreasonably appeared repellant to modern thinkers: how, they ask, can a righteous GOD be satisfied to inflict punishment on the innocent and to let the guilty go free? This criticism is strictly only applicable to the cruder forms of the theory: when the unity of the Father and the Son is sufficiently stressed, there is complete harmony of will between the Father Who exacts the punishment and the Son Who endures it: then it is not a question of a loving Son propitiating a just Father, but of a just and loving GOD accomplishing the work of salvation by the Father sending forth the Son to suffer. The theory thus stated is not open to the

obvious objections to which the cruder view is exposed. But even so the theory is unsatisfactory. It tends to isolate CHRIST's work *for* us from His work *in* us (especially as those who hold it usually ignore or under-emphasize the idea of Sacramental union with CHRIST): it does not make clear the necessity for union of will between the redeemed and the Redeemer; and it gives to punishment and the remission of punishment a greater prominence than is justifiable. At the same time the theory is valuable in so far as it bears witness to the truth of the retributive conception of punishment, to the sinner's utter incapacity to save himself, and to the truth that the Love of GOD is the Love of uncompromising holiness, not of mere "good nature."

The only other distinctive theory of the Atonement—the "vicarious penitence" theory of McLeod Campbell and Moberly—has already been discussed. There are of course very many variants in detail of these theories, which would have to be considered if one were studying the history of the doctrine of Atonement, but all these fall more or less under one of the general types which have been thus briefly indicated, each of which preserves important aspects of the truth but all which are in some respects inadequate (often because they do not sufficiently safeguard the unity of GOD).

CHAPTER XV.

DIVINE IMPASSIBILITY.

THERE is one assumption underlying most of the theories of the Atonement which deserves rather fuller discussion in view of modern tendencies of thought—the doctrine of Divine impassibility. Dr. Mozley's recently-published study of the subject shows how completely belief in the impassibility of GOD has been interwoven into the whole fabric of Christian theology: it is expressly affirmed in the Definition of Chalcedon which has been accepted by the general tradition of the whole of Christendom. But of recent years this has been challenged, though the question has not received the full consideration which it deserves. Dr. Mozley himself is concerned not so much to discuss the doctrine as to furnish the historical basis on which any such discussion must rest. The problem itself is essentially metaphysical. Part of the modern revolt against the doctrine is bound up with the theories of a finite GOD which have already been considered and rejected. But there is another difficulty—and that not a new one: this was stated quite clearly by S. Anselm in the "Proslogion," where he asks how it is possible for GOD to be at the same time compassionate

and impassible : "Sed et misericors simul et impassibilis quomodo es ? Nam si es impassibilis, non compateris : si non compateris, non est tibi miserum cor ex compassione miseri ; quod est esse misericordem."[1] If CHRIST is the revelation of GOD, then He is a GOD of compassion and sympathy ; if it be not true that "in all their affliction He was afflicted,"[2] the Christian revelation crumbles into dust. Nor is it adequate to say that CHRIST's compassion is in His Humanity only ; for that would surely make the attributes of His Humanity higher than those of His Godhead (even if it would not lead us to regard Him as two persons). Christian experience must cry out—

> JESU, Thou art all compassion,
> Pure unbounded love Thou art ;

and this cannot be if He be not "compassion" in His own Divine Person. If impassibility really contradicts this, then Christian thought has no alternative but to reject it.

The real problem is to discover what is meant by the "passibility" which is denied to GOD. Dr. Mozley himself does not make this clear, though his quotations from other authors show that they use the word in various senses. In our common speech, suffering means the endurance of pain or loss : pain in the physical sense is obviously not to be attributed to God Who is pure Spirit ; but to deny spiritual suffering to Him seems to be definitely inconsistent with belief that He is perfectly revealed in JESUS. Many of the criti-

[1] "Proslogion," chap. viii. [2] Isa. lxiii. 9.

cisms of the doctrine of impassibility are simply concerned to demonstrate this. But surely the Greek word *ἀπάθεια* has a different meaning. In the terminology of Alexandrine philosophy, *τὸ ποιεῖν* is opposed to *τὸ πάσχειν*; and perhaps the best equivalents of these in English are those suggested in Drummond's "Philo Judaeus," viz. "efficiency" and "susceptibility"; the first is used of the cause, the second of the effect. It is in the light of this antithesis that *ἀπάθεια* as an attribute to God has to be considered. God is, in the language of Aquinas and the Scholastics, "pure act" (*actus purus*); he is essentially and always Creator, the only Source of all Reality. This belief is a *sine qua non* of theism. One thing which a study of the Arian controversy incidentally makes clear is that the ultimate distinction between God on the one hand and what-is-not-God on the other is the distinction of Creator and creature. But if *τὸ ποιεῖν* (efficiency, creative activity) is the characteristic of God as Creator, equally *τὸ πάσχειν* (susceptibility) is the characteristic of the created. So, as Dr. Mozley points out, Aquinas teaches that passive potentiality which is "the principle of being acted upon by something else"[1] ("principium patiendi ab alio") cannot exist in God. Similar is the teaching of S. John of Damascus, who holds a position in the theology of the Eastern Church more or less like that of S. Thomas in the West. He defines "passion" as "a movement in one thing caused

[1] "Summa Theologica," I. 25, 1.

by another" and contrasts it with "energy" which is "a drastic movement"; and by "drastic" is meant that which is moved of itself."[1] To allow that God could "be acted upon" or "be passive" would be to allow that creation could change its Creator, to make Him a puppet in the hands of His creatures. Human reason and religious reverence alike cry out against such a thought. We can now apply this to the special instance of God's "compassion." In the light of the Cross, the main occasion of God's compassion is seen to be the sin of man; but that does not mean that He is "acted upon" by human sin, for it is hardly rational to hold that human sin is the source (though it may be the occasion) of the noblest work of God. Rather is it true that God is always in Himself by virtue of His own nature perfect Love, and that that Love in the face of human sin appears as "compassion." Yet He is still active, not acted upon; he is always Cause, never effect; though "compassibilis," He is always "impassibilis." So we find that Anselm not only stated the problem, but gave the right answer when he said that God is impassible in Himself, but full of compassion in respect of us. This enables us to retain to the full our conviction that in a real sense God does suffer, but it also enables us to see more fully what is the true character of that suffering. The treatise of Gregory Thaumaturgus expresses this admirably: "In God those are not to be accounted as sufferings which of his own

[1] Quoted in Mozley's "Impassibility of God," p. 100.

will were borne by Him for the common good of the human race, with no resistance from His most blessed and impassible nature. For in His suffering He shows His impassibility. For he who suffers suffers, when the violence of suffering brings pressure to bear on him who suffers contrary to his will. But of him who, while his nature remains impassible, is of his own will immersed in sufferings that he may overcome them, we do not say that he becomes subject to suffering, even though, of his own will, he has shared in sufferings."[1] The language is less clear than S. Anselm's, but the distinction expressed is true and important. Dr. Mozley himself puts the matter clearly in his concluding chapter: "It makes much difference whether, given the notion of a suffering GOD, GOD is thought of as suffering because the world leaves Him no option, in which case GOD's nature must be regarded as rendered passible by the constraint exercised upon it by the world, or whether GOD is said to suffer because in His love He freely associates Himself with the world's suffering by means of a true compassion."[2] Thus we may conclude that the doctrine of Divine impassibility is not only not contrary to a true doctrine of the Atonement, but is also valuable in the formulation of it. It is valuable in thought, because it guards against false ideas of a finite GOD and conserves the important truth of the transcendence of the Creator; and it is also valuable to religious experience, for it preserves the priceless assurance

[1] Quoted in Mozley, op. cit. p. 66.
[2] Op. cit. p. 181.

which modern theories would take away that amid all the changes of this fleeting world we may repose on God's eternal changelessness.[1]

[1] Since I wrote the chapter on Divine Impassibility I have read Baron von Hügel's masterly and inspiring essay on "Suffering and God" ("Essays and Addresses," Second Series). His brief survey of the different strands of thought on the problem is a valuable supplement to Dr. Mozley's book, and his criticism of the cruder theories of a "suffering God" is admirable. He rightly emphasizes the truth—often overlooked—that "the thirst of religion is, at bottom, a metaphysical thirst, and the intimations of religion are, ultimately, metaphysical intimations": and so "the religious sense . . . must be allowed to press on to, to be moved and satisfied only by the Ultimate, the Absolute." It is therefore important to repudiate any theories of a "suffering God" which make Him limited by His creation. Further—and this is the most valuable point in the essay—Von Hügel emphasizes the great religious as well as philosophic significance of the truth that God is pure joy: this is often overlooked by those who insist on the sufferings of God. When this mistake is made, Christianity is reduced to a mere expression of the tragedy and agony of life, as we see it in such a writer as Miguel de Unamuno.

Yet we may still question whether Von Hügel allows enough significance to the theory that "God suffers" and whether he does not really *assume* some of the points that he sets out to establish. For example, he seems to assume that the fact that God is "Unmixed Joy, Entire Delectation" is inconsistent with His suffering. But have we any right to assume that the human psychological state which S. Paul describes as being "sorrowful, yet alway rejoicing" and which seems to be peculiarly manifested by S. Francis of Assisi has no counterpart in God?

Again, Von Hügel asserts categorically that "suffering is intrinsically an Evil," and suggests that the only alternative view is that it is "but a seeming Evil." But we may question whether this is true to the facts of Christian experience. That *some* suffering is evil is undoubtedly true; and we can welcome Von Hügel's hostility to any theory that minimizes this. But is it not equally true that *some* suffering is neither really nor apparently evil but positively good? There is no more reason for treating *all* suffering as evil than for treating *all* pleasure as good, yet the latter view is irreconcilable with Christian morality, which is compelled to brand some pleasures as sinful. So there are some kinds of suffering for which the Christian can only thank God as one of the richest things in life. And it is sufferings of that kind which modern thinkers desire to attribute to God.

Closely akin to this is Von Hügel's suggestion that "suffering and

sin . . . are sufficiently like to make the permanent treatment of Sin as intrinsically evil exceedingly difficult where suffering is treated as not evil at all." But is this really the case? If, e.g., it could be shown that Jesus was in any way subject to sin, we should all recognize that it would be impossible any longer to regard Him as Perfect Man, and *a fortiori* He would not be Divine: but the fact that He is "the Man of Sorrows" is no evidence against His human perfection or His Godhead; it is indeed supremely through His sufferings that the glory of God is revealed.

But one rather wonders whether Von Hügel is using the word "suffering" in quite its natural sense. He accepts wholeheartedly the conception of a God Who "sympathizes," but seems to deny that "Real Sympathy means Real Suffering." Here he seems to think that the suffering supposed to be necessary is either "suffering precedent to the sympathy" to enable the sympathizer to understand or "suffering subsequent to the sympathy" and produced by it. But the suffering of sympathy is neither antecedent nor subsequent but is coincident with the sympathy itself. The very derivation of the *words* "sympathy" and "compassion" seems to refute Von Hügel's argument here. He cites as an illustration the fact that Father Damien, though he never suffered from leprosy, yet "sympathized with the sufferings of the lepers more, doubtless, than the average sufferer from leprosy sympathized." This no doubt is true: Father Damien had no need to suffer from leprosy in his own person before he could sympathize with others: in Von Hügel's language there was no need for "suffering precedent to the sympathy": but if we endeavour to analyse what Father Damien's "sympathy" was, can we express it better than by saying that *he suffered the leprosy of others as if it were his own?* And is not this the essence of all true sympathy? So we express God's sympathy not by saying "before their affliction," but "*in* their affliction He was afflicted."

It is only with reluctance that I criticize a thinker to whom the whole Church owes so much and who is no longer with us in person. But I feel that along the lines suggested in the text it is possible to conserve all that the best Catholic theology has understood by the Impassibility of God and all that Von Hügel so beautifully teaches about the Joy of God, and at the same time to recognize more fully than he does the positive value underlying the modern demand for a "suffering God."

CHAPTER XVI.

THE ETERNAL SIGNIFICANCE OF HISTORY.

This problem of relating the sufferings of the Passion, regarded as an experience of God, to His eternal and changeless Being is in the last resort only one aspect of a larger and more fundamental question. A real difficulty to the acceptance of any Christian doctrine of the Atonement is that expressed in the question "How can historical events have an eternal significance?" It is urged that the Crucifixion and Resurrection of our Lord, even if true, are mere happenings at one point of time; surely it is not rational to suggest that they are intimately concerned with the forgiveness of the sins of men and women of all time? This objection is essentially a criticism of the whole character of Christianity as a historical religion: but it is specially focussed upon the doctrine of the Atonement, and therefore demands some discussion. Ultimately our answer to the difficulty must depend upon our conception of Time and its relation to Eternity. This can obviously only be very lightly touched upon here. The difficulty of considering the matter lies in the fact that, whether we regard Time as objectively real or as a mere form of human perception, we ourselves are in Time and therefore can only dimly conceive of Eternity.

We are driven back upon the use of metaphors and analogies. If, for example, we compare the mental impression of a Beethoven sonata of one who is painfully beginning to learn it, note by note, and of another who has a real grasp of it, we cannot fail to observe that for the latter the sonata is more of a whole than for the former. The beginner looks at each chord by itself, apart from its musical context : and the sonata is for him a *succession* of chords and notes following one another in time. For the accomplished musician, the successiveness is hardly noticeable : he sees the sonata as a whole and each separate note or chord is viewed as part of that whole and inseparable from the rest. It is not impossible for our minds to conceive of this carried a stage further—of a kind of knowledge from which successiveness has altogether vanished and in which everything is seen as one inseparable whole *sub specie aeternitatis*. An analogy from space may help to elucidate the thought. Picture a man standing on a straight line and looking along it in one direction : one part of the line (that which is behind him) is entirely outside his field of vision ; and even in the part which he can see his vision is defective because he sees things in wrong perspective ; those which are nearer to him on the line appear larger than those which are farther away ; and eventually there comes a point where his vision ceases altogether. But imagine also an observer overhead in an aeroplane : he looks down on the line as a whole, and sees the part which is hidden from the other man as well as that which lies within his range of vision ; moreover, as he

rises higher in the air, the angles at which he sees different objects on the line become less and less different and so he sees them in truer proportion. The man standing on the line is analogous to the human mind in time : one direction (the future) is totally excluded from our view ; and even in the past our knowledge is out of proportion because we see that which is nearer to us in time larger than that which is more remote. The observer in the aeroplane is analogous to the Divine Mind in eternity : God sees the future equally with the past, because he sees the time-series as a whole, and he sees every part in its true proportion. If we attempt to think out the significance of the Cross in the light of these analogies, we arrive at some such conclusion as the following. Human history seems to us to be made up of discrete parts —what we call events—more or less isolated from one another, though our reason (that in us which is in the image of God) rebels against the ultimate truth of such a conception and compels us to try to connect them together by establishing the existence of relations between what appears to be isolated : and this is what we endeavour to do whenever we write history. But God sees human history as it really is, not a series of isolated fragments, but a coherent whole. In that whole He, the Creator, is always active with the activity of perfect Love : and that Love in the face of sin is always a suffering Love (in the sense defined in the passage quoted above from Gregory Thaumaturgus). So, from God's standpoint, the Cross is interwoven with the whole of history in the sense

that history as an indivisible whole is permeated with the suffering Love of God.

So the Seer of Patmos in his vision of heaven sees standing in the midst of the throne of God the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world. The historical Crucifixion on Calvary is thus not the introduction into history of something entirely new, as if God were changed and became something which he has not been before. But we are limited by time and cannot see history as a whole in this way, and for that reason God has revealed that great truth, His own redemptive activity, at a point in time: He has acted *in time* so that eternal reality may come within our ken. The Priesthood of Christ is eternal ("after the order of Melchizedek"),[1] and the sacrifice of Himself is eternal, for it is the very character of God to be self-giving. But in the historical facts of the Gospel story we can grasp Him: we can handle and see the Word of God made Flesh. And moreover, since we not only cannot think in terms of eternity but also are limited in our memory of past time, He continues that one eternal and unchanging sacrifice offered in time on Calvary by its perpetual re-presentation in the Eucharist, through which individuals in every age come into touch with the Crucified and Risen Christ. It is this stress on fact rather than theory in the Christian message which makes it possible for Christianity to be a Catholic religion. The first sermons in "Acts" are almost entirely statements

[1] Heb. vi. 20-vii. 3.

of facts, and so are the Catholic Creeds. Still, to-day the *primary* message of the Church is not "GOD is Love" but "CHRIST died for our sins according to the Scriptures . . . and the third day He rose again according to the Scriptures:" we get to the truth that GOD is Love *through* the historic facts which are the kernel of the Christian Gospel. If the message were simply the doctrinal statement about GOD without the historic facts, there would always be the uncertainties that come from the changing categories of thought, and the use of abstract terms in itself would require a certain level of intellectual development in those who were to receive it. But historic facts are unchanging: if JESUS really did die and rise again, that fact is the same for the man in the twentieth century as for the man in the first century, the same for the Oriental as for the Western, the same for the simple child as for the genius. The Gospel of the Cross is Catholic and can evoke the response which we saw was necessary for full forgiveness from all, because the child can understand the plain fact, "He loved me, and gave Himself for me:"[1] yet its implications go so deep that they offer food for inexhaustible thought and study to the greatest minds of our race. A religion cannot be Catholic unless it is both utterly simple and infinitely profound: Christianity satisfies those conditions because it is a historic religion, based on the activity of the eternal GOD in time.

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[1] Gal. ii. 20.

We set out to show that the ultimate test of the rationality of a religion was the way in which it met the problem of evil : then an attempt was made to indicate what were the main conditions of any reasonable solution of that problem. Of the religions of the world only Christianity even pretends to offer such a solution in its doctrine of atonement through the Cross. This does not make all mysteries plain, but it does meet the essential needs of human thought that the Lamb of God Who taketh away the sins of the world is also Himself the Truth.

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